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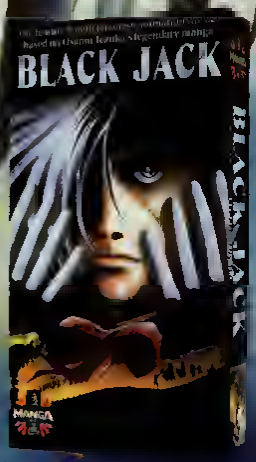

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TOKYOPOP

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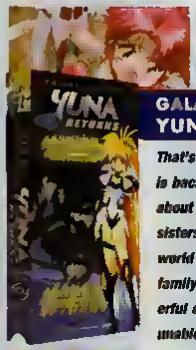

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That's right, Galaxy Fraulein Yuna is back! Bet not everyone's thrilled about it, especially an evil trio of sisters who plan to destroy the world - a diabolical, dysfunctional family of female androids so powerful even the galactic military are unable to stop them.

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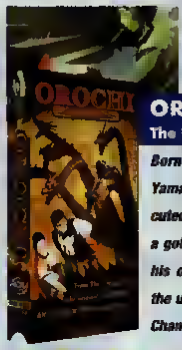

OROCHI
The Eight-Headed Dragon

Born under an evil sign, Takeru Yamato's own father orders him executed at birth! Miraculously saved by a golden phoenix yet doomed to slay his own brother, Takeru must claim the ultimate weapon and become the Champion of the Gods.

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Those Who Hunt Elves
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Those Who Hunt Elves strike a deal with an elven mayor to rid her town of an infestation of skeletons. The condition? She must get naked. What they don't know is that this clever elf has a double-cross in mind that could have really BIG consequences.

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Original Dirty Pair
Volume 2

When 300 miners are wiped from the face of a planet by the "Wrath of God" the Dirty Pair are sent to placate the disgruntled deity. Then the Pair take unlikely roles as nurse-maids to a band of delinquent prodigies. It's a desperate situation, and the Dirty Pair are the galaxy's last hope to discipline the unruly bunch.

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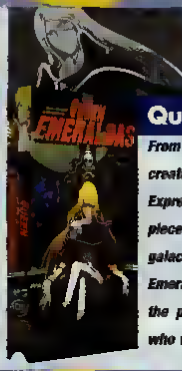

Queen Emeraldas

From Leiji Matsumoto, the acclaimed creator of STARBLAZERS and Galaxy Express 999, comes a new masterpiece! Branded a pirate by a tyrannical galactic government, the enigmatic Emeraldas sails the Sea of Stars like the privateers of old, fighting those who would destroy freedom.

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Sorcerer Hunters
Vol. 4 - Phantoms of Love

The Sorcerer Hunters go undercover to discover sinister secrets behind a shady gambling establishment where the losers forfeit their lives! While Carrot tries to stack the odds against the house, the rest find themselves facing certain death in the Arena!

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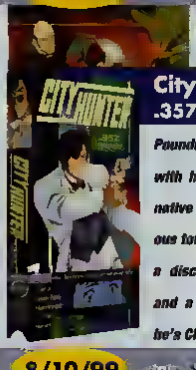

City Hunter
.357 Magnum

Pounding the streets of Shinjuku with his trusty .357 magnum, this native son of Japan's most notorious town is a man with a plan. He's a disco hero, a real heartbreaker and a force to be reckoned with; he's City Hunter.

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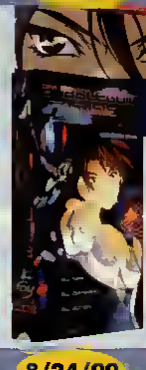

Bubblegum Crisis - Tokyo 2040: SHADOW WAR

In the aftermath of the great earthquake, one ruthless corporation stands ready to take over the devastated city of Tokyo with an army of synthetic monsters. Only the Knight Sabers defy the monolithic power of Genom in the cyberpunk masterpiece Bubble Gum Crisis!

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Hell's Spawn

Legendary swordsman Jubei Yagyu returns to his ancestral home seeking respite from the bloody duties of a feudal retainer, but soon unsettling rumors reach him. Four dead heroes of a bygone era have renewed their claim to life. Forced to take up the sword once more, Jubei returns to the path of vengeance and damnation.

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FROM THE EDITOR... 3-1

Transitions. From diapers to undies, from grammar school up through college, even from job to job, transitions tend to be both exciting and uncertain. Transitions aren't always welcome either because many people hate change. But change is a part of life. People can resist change all they want, but life goes on and changes happen no matter how much we wish they wouldn't. With that said, welcome to the first issue of Tokyo Pop, formerly known as MixxZine.

Aside from the name change, and me being at the helm of this magazine there won't be a whole of lot of changes from previous issues of Mixx, at first. I stress the words "at first." Now don't get all whiny on me just yet. I think most readers who've stuck with us so far will like many of the changes we've got down the pike.

In future issues, Tokyo Pop aims to cover pop-culture from all of Asia, not just Japan, because Japan isn't the only Asian country influencing our own. Look at Hong Kong-action flicks for a shining example. To name just a few, Jackie Chan, Sammo Hung, Jet Li, are all names that were, until recently, known by only a few, extreme, hard-core movie buffs. Now, Jackie is practically a house-hold name, Sammo has his own top-ten rated, prime-time television show, and Jet Li stole the Lethal Weapon 4 movie from big gun Mel Gibson. And they did it without giant robots or girls dressed in sailor suits (hmmm, Sammo in a sailor suit is not a sight I wanted to conjure up).

But there's so much more cool stuff to cover, and Tokyo Pop wants its readers to see it all. This issue's cover, by artist Kenichi Kutsugi, is a perfect example of the digital pop-culture we're trying to showcase for U.S. audiences. Check out Kutsugi-san's interview on page 8, with lots more eye-popping art of "Yuki," the virtual idol. Also on tap is an interview with Mizuho Takayama, the man who created the Mobil Suit Gundam: Blue Destiny manga. Read his interview, then check out his work on page 40.

Our video game coverage won't change much because its presence in the States is huge, and growing. It's a cliché but, those who want to know what'll be the hottest game in the U.S. should check what's hot in Japan. Player's Klub and Import Game Strategy Guide sections have the Japan video-game industry covered. Also, check out our E3 coverage for video-game overload.

We can't talk pop culture without mentioning music. From anime and video-game soundtracks to the latest J-Pop bands and singers, Tokyo Pop aims to expose as many of our readers to the broad spectrum of music from overseas. Our CD Reviews are jam-packed with the latest from Japan. In the future, Tokyo Pop's CD Reviews will have a more international feel.

Minor changes are slated for our coverage of anime and manga. We'll continue our coverage of anime through Anime Sneak Peaks, Walkthrough, and X Reviews. For manga lovers, future issues of Tokyo Pop will spotlight specific manga as well as previewing up-and-coming manga. Rest assured that we will continue to run our most popular manga.

To those readers who've hung with us through all the controversy ("controversy"? What "controversy"?), thank you. Starting a new job like this is quite a change for me. I'm not a real editor, but I play one at Tokyo Pop. When I say "play," I do mean play, because, fortunately, I love anime, manga, Hong Kong-action flicks, toys, video games, anime and video-game soundtracks, *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, comic books, all of geekdom. I'm a geek in Heaven, and my hope is that you devoted Tokyo Pop readers will give this geek a chance during this transition.

Brian Kaya
Office Whining Boy/Associate Editor

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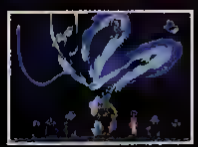
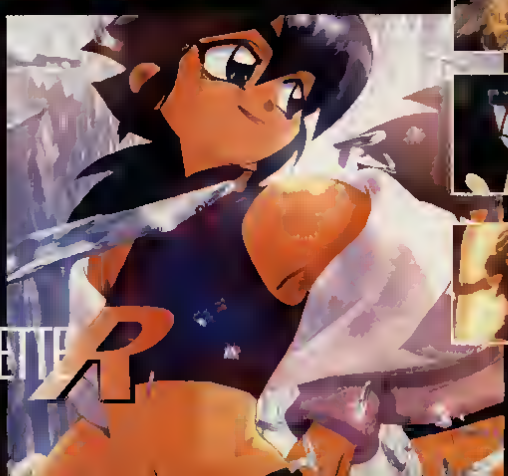


Gene Starwind is a man with a past, but he doesn't talk about it. Working as a mercenary and bounty hunter, sometimes he works within the law and sometimes he doesn't. He and his female companions travel the galaxy in his ship, the Outlaw Star. And no matter how fast they go, danger always manages to catch up to them.

Also Look For:

Meet Lime, Cherry, and Bloodberry before they became the famous Marionettes they are today. This is the very first Saber Marionette animation, and it shows a somewhat different side to the characters. They're younger, but they still manage to get in just as much trouble. And of course, there's a group of adversaries to fight as their adventure gets underway. These girls never give up.



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THE LETTERS

Greetings from Fussa City, Japan the manga motherland! I've been reading Tokyo Pop/Mixx since I first really turned onto manga, nearly a year and a half ago. Although I am missing a few issues I've read every one since the beginning. While I m not entirely satisfied with all of the changes you've made, the mag as a whole has really grown into itself. You've done a stellar job of bringing over some excellent titles that the bigger publishers like Viz and Studio Proteus/Dark Horse seem satisfied to ignore. Well, their loss is our gain, thanks to you. Gambatte, Tokyo Pop! My second point is a little nugget of info for your beleaguered editor, Stu Levy. "Pushing the envelope" (issue 2.4 "From the Editor,") was coined by U.S. Air Force test pilots back in the 1950's. Imagine an envelope, where the length is speed and the height is altitude. The pilots were always trying to go as high and as fast as they could, pushing the "corner" of the 'envelope" up and over. See there? You learn something new every day. "Success is how far you bounce when you hit bottom"–Gen. George S. Patton. Keep on truckin'!–"JP" Miller, Fussa City, Tokyo, Japan

First off I'd like to say "Thank you" for making it possible for me to read the original Sailor Moon comic. Your magazine also got me interested in Parasyte and Magic Knights Rayearth. I have also taken a liking to Sorcerer Hunters. I was upset at first that Sailor Moon wasn t going to be in the magazine any more but then I learned it would be in a new magazine called SMILE. I [now] subscribed to Smile also. I love your Pocket Manga and read those as well. I can't wait for more of them to come out. I want to offer you some suggestions. These are only suggestions and you don't have to do anything with them. I can see moving Sailor Moon to another magazine. I can also see it making you more money. Some people are idiots. They don't understand that the point of a business is to make money. Some [people] have mentioned that your magazine is being turned into a "Shonen" or boy's magazine and will have more graphic (violent) content or what not. Honestly as an eighteen year-old female, I don't care. I like your magazine, and it being a "guy magazine" doesn't bother me at all. HOWEVER, guys are a totally different story. Men like Sailor Moon too. I hope you don't forget that. As a person who has a keen eye for business, I suggest that you make SMILE a mix (no pun intended) for both guys and girls. Especially the cover. No guy wants to walk into a comic-book store and buy a magazine with a hot pink cover that is clearly for girls. It's embarrassing. As for the content, how about instead of how people are dressing, or SMILE fads or whatever, keep it geared towards what is in your magazine. How about reviews on new anime or manga that are geared more towards girls (i.e. love stories and what not) such as Fushigi Yuugi or something like that. These are just my suggestions. It's not like you even have to read this email, but I hope you will consider them in the best interest for you, as a business, and for me and others, as consumers. Thanks very much for reading this.–Mara

You probably hear this from a lot of people, but you guys and your magazine are totally awesome! I am a major fan of yours and I just want you to know what a great job you're doing "down" there (I live "up" here in British Columbia, Canada). Keeping sending out the cool manga!–Danielle Bastien, Prince George, B.C., Canada

I gotta say, "Wow!" I can't believe the change of pace I'm Mixx/Tokyo Pop! I love it! Sorcerer Hunters is super cool. I like it a lot. It almost makes up for ditching Sailor Moon. Sorry to sound so mean but Sailor Moon is the best anime/manga in the world. Well, at least I believe it to be.–Heidi Jackson, Cloquet, MN

Hey there people at Smile/Tokyo Pop! I adore Smile and Tokyo Pop! They're the first things I look for in the mail. I am obsessed with Sailor Venus, Project A-ko, Shampoo from Ranma, Umi from Magic Knights Rayearth, and Miaka from Fushigi Yugi! I love all forms of anime. You name it, I love it. Now I'm rambling like a drunk. Anyway I love everything you're doing with both mags, except the new format you're using, but I m getting used to it. I have every issue so far! I bought a Sailor Moon video at Toys R Us and it had a subscription form for MixxZine. It said it featured Sailor Moon, so I decided to get a subscription. I had no idea it was the very first issue ever. I thought it was something already up and running. When I got the first issue I was super happy, but I was so crushed when you took out Sailor Moon just when my favorite Scout, Sailor Venus, came in the comic. However, I understand why you had to get rid of it. Well, thanks for giving me a chance to read all the cool stuff you put in your mag and for reading my letter. Keep up the yum-yum, delicious work! I'll keep reading!–Sailor V's biggest fan, Andy

We encourage all readers to send us their suggestions, opinions, and points of view. We want to know what you're thinking and feeling, so let us know. Snail mail or e-mail, we love reading letters, even the ones that tell us we suck. We do hold the right to edit them for brevity, grammar, and the occasional foul language, but we promise to keep the tone. For snail-mail letters, write to us at Tokyo Pop Letters, 746 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007. E-mail us at [illegible]

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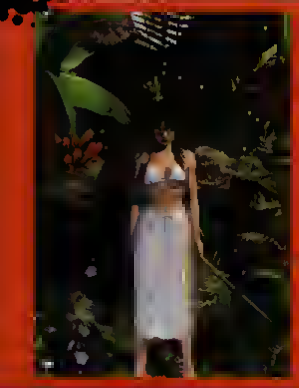
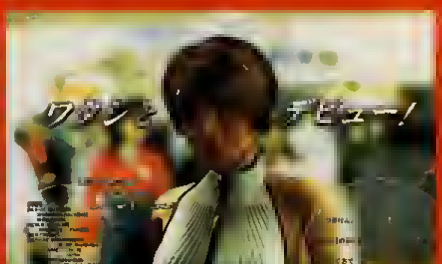


kenichi



Kenichi Kutsugi calls himself the slowest cartoonist in Japan. While that may be true, anyone who sees his elaborate work immediately understands why he takes his time. His works are scrupulously drawn, and he never cuts corners, most notably in the details. He works primarily as a cartoonist and character designer. His comics include *Two Dimensions Club* Vol. 1-2, *Guard Dog* Vol. 1-10, *Libido*, and *Kaidanji*, both currently serialized in the comic mag *Young Jump (Shueisha)*. One of his digital works is virtual idol "Yuki Terai," featured on the cover. Yuki best illustrates Kutsugi's sense of delicacy. His works can also be seen in the Dreamcast game, *Under Cover*, where Kutsugi created some of the main characters. *Under Cover* is scheduled for release this summer in Japan.

TokyoPop: What made you decide to be a cartoonist? Kutsugi: One of the reasons is that I was show-offy. As a child, I wanted to be famous and have people ask me for my autograph. At that time a cartoonist was a star. Every boy and girl dreamed of being a cartoonist at some point. However, the biggest reason is that I was very fond of drawing. I remember drawing a picture as a kindergartner; I wouldn't actually call it a cartoon. It was just a sketch. Then I started drawing cartoon-like things in elementary school. Imitating famous cartoonists' styles, I learned to allot frames and make balloons. That was during high school, when I started writing manuscripts in the proper form. Back then, I used to draw with a pencil or a fountain pen, because I couldn't afford the proper pens for drawing.

So, as a high-school student you were already seriously considering a career as a cartoonist? Just before graduating from high school, I won a prize in Shogakukan's audition. That's when I started to think I could become a cartoonist. After graduating high school I went to Tokyo and entered a professional school for designers; only to quit two weeks later. (Laughs.)

What happened? Well, it's a long story... Are you ready for this? In a word, I was bored. Design school was far from what I had imagined. Few of the students were serious about making a career as a designer or a cartoonist. In a class where we learned how to draw rough sketches, I was shocked to find several students dressed up as if they were going to a party. That was absurd. I would wear rags because we would often get filthy. Another thing is that since I was working as a newsboy, I couldn't take early morning and evening classes, let alone a seminar. I was in a special class full of other newsboys and newsgirls, and I found myself talking about our job, saying things like "It was so windy I couldn't stop some of the papers from flying away!" There was no creative stimulation in the class.

When did you start using a computer as an art tool? I had long yearned to use a computer back when they were still called 'micro computers.' When I was a junior-high student, I saw a TV program showing a rotating glass. I figured out that it wasn't a real glass, but a computer generated image. Then I bought Fujitsu's FM 7 and tried in vain to do the same thing by myself. But to do so, I had to program the whole thing. I had to mark every small point, dot by dot, to draw a glass. I gave up on the glass, but not the yearning to try. Long after that, in 1992, I happened to see a Macintosh at my friend's house. It was the most amazing thing. I knew Photoshop™ would enable me to do what I had wanted to do. Then, in 1996, I completed *Guard Dog* and got some money. I immediately bought a MacIntosh and began to teach myself how to make use of it by reading guide books and checking the Internet. I got most of the information I needed off of the Internet.

Pulse Interactive is releasing the Dreamcast game *Under Cover* using characters you designed. What did you find most difficult about that project? The first thing was that I had to work with a team. I'm used to working alone. Second is that I had trouble imagining what kind of characters would be suitable for the game. There wasn't even a background picture. All I knew was that the story was set in the near future. The staff from Pulse Interactive gave me free reign and told me to draw anything I wanted. They must have trusted me and my style, but that put more pressure on me.

There are lots of girls in your work. In *Guard Dog*, you created a variety of girls. How do you get images? I think every cartoonist has difficulty in characterizing different types of characters. I'm no exception. As for Yuki Terai, I wanted to draw someone whose hair was short. I based Yuki on Yuki Uchida. Uchida is a Japanese actress with short hair. Kutsugi has her autograph on his office wall.

What kind of work would you like to do in the future? I want to create a character next, starting with modeling, if I can find the time.

Do you have any advice for those who want to be a creator like you? Just enjoy what you are doing. When you go to work doing what you want to do, you'll face many obstacles if you treat work like a job. If you find a way to somehow make those obstacles into challenges, or to help motivate you, you'll spontaneously form your own style. Always!

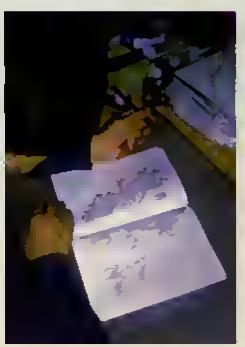
all images
© Kenichi

Interview by Katsutoshi Kawamata

Mizuho Takayama

creator of the Gundam: Blue Destiny manga

Gundam has become more of a genre, than a specific anime series.



Turning a childhood passion into an actual paying job is a dream that most people, well, only dream of. Not so for manga artist and writer, Mizuho Takayama. A huge fan since the series began 20 years ago, Takayama has parlayed his love of *Gundam* into several projects where he created the manga version of Japan's top mecha anime series. One such project is *Gundam Side Story: Blue Destiny*, which sadly reaches its conclusion in this issue of TokyoPop. We visited Takayama in his Tokyo studio to talk about *Blue Destiny* and his other works.

TokyoPop: *Blue Destiny* [*BD*] was based on the Sega-Saturn video game of the same name...
Takayama: It was a cross-media tie-up, with the manga created simultaneously as the game. I based the manga storyline on the plot the game developers created. The manga stayed very close to the game's plot and was serialized just as the game was being developed, so basically it was a marketing and PR tool for the game.(Laughs.)

I hear there will be a sequel to the game. They're calling it another "side story," but it's not really a continuation of *Blue Destiny*, though it does take place in the same world. It's a hybrid shooting and simulation game, and will be more realistic than *BD*, with less of a comic book feel to it.

Why don't we check out the game? Sure. [Takayama grabs a controller and starts kicking some serious mecha butt.]

You're really smoking the bad guys. Are you a pretty hard-core gamer? Actually, no [as Takayama continues to wipe out enemies with only one eye on the screen]. I didn't even own a game machine until the *BD* project got underway. While writing the manga, I played betas of *BD* all the time and just got used to it. It's actually the only game I'm any good at.(Laughs.)

How important is the story to the actual game play? Well, this is basically a shooting game, so I guess the answer is "not very." If you want to see how the story unfolds, you have to learn how to shoot [and get to the higher stages]. It doesn't have any RPG elements to it and the story doesn't change depending on how you play. But unlike a normal shooter, it's a Gundam game, so the fans want some kind of story to go along with it. There are some RPG Gundam games in the works, but for *BD*, it's more like "If you want the details of the story, read the manga!"(Laughs.) There are actually three *Blue Destiny* games. Originally, the plan was to create three manga novels as well, but there's only one to date.

Any plans to bring out the next two volumes? Well, the original publishing company went bust, so probably not.

How were you chosen to be the writer of *BD*? I had written Gundam stories before and the editor in charge of the *BD* project was a friend, so he asked me to do it.

Were you a Gundam fan before you started doing Gundam projects? Oh yeah. I've been a huge fan since the series started. It was definitely a thrill to get to do Gundam mangas. I actually started out as an animator and worked on *Data Gundam* as an artist.

Do you still do anime work? No. There's not enough time to do both, so you have to choose one or the other. Doing the manga is more fulfilling creatively. With anime, for the most part, all the animator does is draw cells based on the directions of the director. With manga, however, the writer creates the story and the presentation, as well as the artwork itself, so creating manga is more interesting and challenging work. Being able to create the story makes it much more appealing.

I guess you'd have to become an anime director to have the same kind of creative control. But directors don't get to draw. Doing manga is the only way you get to create all the different elements.

Which manga writers have influenced you the most? Yukinobu Hoshino (*The Two Faces of Tomorrow*, *2001 Nights*). His work has had a tremendous influence on me. The influence of early-generation artists like Osamu Tezuka was less direct. Tezuka created the basic form, but it was Hoshino's work that I really used as a guide.

What was the toughest thing about creating *BD*? The schedule!(Laughs.) I guess the toughest thing was the fact that the game and manga were created simultaneously. While serializing the manga in the magazine, I had to be careful not to include elements in the manga until after the game's sequel went on sale. But then the sequel got delayed, so we had to stretch out the episodes of the manga. When the sequel was again delayed, we had to stop serialization of the manga. To stretch out the serialization, on a few occasions, I had to make up new episodes and even new characters that weren't included in the game.

Who decided the content of each serialized episode? I did, although I worked with Bandai [publisher of the game] and Sunrise [producer of the anime]. I don't think Tomino-san [the director of the Gundam anime series] actually reviewed the manga. Since the Gundam series has such a long history and a large following, it was important not to conflict with the story to date. But, since I'd been a big Gundam fan for so long, I was very familiar with those issues, so it wasn't really a problem.

What do you think about *Turn A Gundam*? Well, I've only seen the first part, so it's hard to say. I was really surprised by the design, however.

It's a drastic change in design, especially in terms of color. Yeah, it's almost like there's no need to call it "Gundam." (Laughs.) But recently, unless you attach "Gundam" to the title, the product doesn't sell. It used to be that there had to be some relation to the series to call it "Gundam," but recently a lot of mecha projects get the "Gundam" moniker just to boost sales. *G Gundam*, for example, has nothing to do with the Gundam world. (Laughs.) I like the story, but it's not Gundam.

What separates the real Gundam works from the impostors? All the Gundams have robots, but the true Gundam story is, in the end, a story about soldier robots. *G Gundam*, for example, is more like a super-hero story. It's just a couple of robots fighting each other. (Laughs.) That's a key difference from the original Gundam.

So Gundam has become a brand. Right. From a sales standpoint it's easier to make a derivative version of Gundam than it is to create a new mecha series. Gundam has become more of a genre, than a specific anime series. I have to say I prefer the original versions.

You did an original story about Gundam set in China. Right. I created a new story for the premiere issue of Comic Bon Bon magazine. It was Gundam set in modern China. The original Gundam concept outlines an international defense force, so I figured there must have been Gundam in China as well. That's how I came up with that story. I was hoping to continue the story if it was popular, but it wasn't. (Laughs.) Actually Bon Bon is for little kids, so it wasn't the right magazine for my work, which tends to be geared toward an older audience. I've also contributed works to a Gundam Giren (Gundam's Greed) collection. It's a fairly close-knit industry, so when a Gundam project comes up, the editors choose writers from a core of Gundam writers, of which I'm happily one. As a Gundam fan, I appreciate it.

What do you think about seeing your work in English? I think it's great. It's exciting to have a wider audience across more countries. I realize the need to adjust the content to fit the local markets, but when you flip the art [to read from left to right, instead of from right to left, as in the Japanese original], you can spot some places where I touched up to cover mistakes. As an artist, I notice things like that. (Laughs.) But I don't think the average reader notices. Also, all of a sudden everybody's carrying their guns in their left hands! (Laughs.) But I think it's great that people overseas are reading my work.

By Matt Galgani

SHOJO KAKUMEI UTENA
REVOLUTIONARY GIRL UTENA

© Be-PaPas/Chiho Saito/Shogakkan/Shokaku Linkai/TV Tokyo

Utena Tenjou

Akio Otori

Touga Kiryuu

In the movie's most romantic scene...

Originally, the movie version of *Shojo Kakumei Utena (Revolutionary Girl Utena)* was to be in Japanese theaters before this issue hit the newsstands, but at press time, the release date had been indefinitely postponed. For those not familiar with the TV show, in a word, it's bizarre. Fans looking for convoluted plots and buckets of melodrama, can pull up a chair; their stars are in alignment.

Set in an unknown era of a heavily-Europeanized Japan, the story follows the development of a 14-year-old girl named Utena, who lost her parents at an early age. Contemplating suicide after her parents' death, Utena was saved by a charming prince who gave her a ring with a rose insignia, telling her to "keep your noble mind." The series revolves around a now teenage Utena, who studies the art of dueling at the Ohtori School. Oh yeah... did I mention

Anthy Himemiya

(left)Has Akio gotten younger?! Rumors are emerging about his relationship with Anthy... (below)Look for a more serious Touga than the one you know from the TV series.

...Utena takes the hand of Anthy and dances.

that she disguises herself as a young man, which creates all kinds of interesting gender issues as she mingles with other male and female characters?

The producers are being tight-lipped about the content of the movie version, but they have let slip that the story is not a continuation of the TV series. Rather, the movie is set in the same time frame as the TV series, yet the story and the characters have been changed to tell the story in a different way. Cool concept.

There's been a lot of buzz around the relationship between the beautiful Anthy (who believes Utena to be a young man) and Utena. Look for a dramatic scene in which Anthy and Utena dance together, giving expression to their gender-blurring love for each other. Hmmmmm...

–Matt Galgani

SAMURAI SPIRITS (samurai shodown)

In conjunction with the release of SNK's Neo Geo Pocket Color game, the first of the two-volume OVA of *Asura Zanmaden Samurai Spirits 2* hit Japanese stores on June 25th. Known as *Samurai Shodown* in the U.S., the *Samurai Spirits* game series is a fighting game in the same genre as Capcom's *Street Fighter*.

Produced by Enix, *Asura Zanmaden* is based on SNK's game, but will have a storyline unique to the OVA. As one would expect from an *SS* anime, it is a story of bloody revenge.

The world is once again at peace, after the upheaval caused by Kaitei Yuga (Yuga, Emperor of Destruction) failed to resurrect the god of darkness, Ankokushin. The peaceful life long-sought by the beautiful Nakoruru is short-lived after she runs into a disorlented Shiki wandering the nearby fields. Shiki, under Yuga's influence, is considered the enemy.

Nonetheless, Nakoruru takes her in, believing that it was Yuga's power, not Shiki's own inclinations, that made her fight for the Emperor of Destruction. Trouble starts when Asura, the Swordsman from Hell, vows revenge against Yuga and decides that killing Shiki will help accomplish that goal. Despite charges by those around her that Shiki is the enemy and should be killed, Nakoruru puts her own life on the line to save Shiki's. And with that, the battle lines are drawn...

As this synopsis shows, *Asura Zanmaden* will appeal to fans of the game, but those unfamiliar with the series may have a hard time following the plot and relating to the characters. Such was the case with *Samurai Shodown the Motion Picture* (released in the U.S. by AD Vision), but then, as now, there won't be many complaints from hard-core SS fans.

–Matt Gaigani

Akihabara Dennogumi (akihabara digital brain team)

© KA-NON/Kodansha/TBS

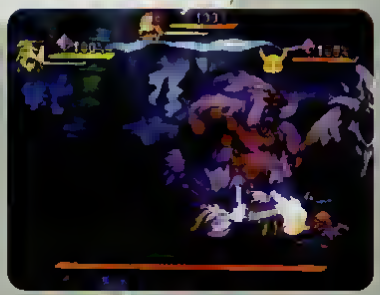
With all the rain and sticky humidity, summer is not the best time to be in Japan. However, the wave of cool summer movies helps add a little sunshine. On that list of summer features is *Akihabara Dennogumi: 2011-nen Natsu yasumi (Akihabara Digital Brain Team' Summer Vacation, 2011)*. Based on the *Akihabara Dennogumi* TV series which first aired in 199[illegible] and ran for 26 episodes on TBS, the movie promises to take the action and scale of this "SF comical action anime" to a new level. With Production IG (*Ghost in the Shell*, two *Patlabor* movies) creating the anime, it's likely a promise made good.

Combining mecha action, a simulation pet, and *bishojo* (beautiful young girls) anime, *Akihabara Dennogumi* is the story of four junior high-school girls and their pet, PataPi (who transforms into a battle robot), who team up to form the Digital Brain Team. In the movie version, the Team's plan to spend summer vacation at the beach is brutally disrupted when about 500 meters of Akihabara (THE place to go for electronics in Tokyo) suddenly disappears into space. Team leader Hibari and the others are soon entangled in the attempt to solve the mystery and save Akihabara. But just what will become of Akihabara?! And what will become of the Digital Brain Team?!

—Matt Galgani

聖剣伝説 LEGEND OF MANA

レジェンド オブ マナ



Legend of Mana plays out on a storybook-like backdrop, with a whimsical color scheme and designs, belying a truly dark and hideous evil that awaits. Bwaaahaaa-haaa-haaaaaa!

sequence at left. As with previous installments of the *Mana* series, battles are more action-oriented than standard turn-based RPGs. Characters can move around the screen, strike from a distance, or combine attacks, above: Characters will meet all kinds of wh "characters" on their journey through *Legend of Mana*. I draw the line at drill-instructor duckies barking commands at me

TITLE:	LEGEND OF MANA
PLATFORM:	PlayStation
PUBLISHER:	Square
GENRE:	Action/RPG
REL. DATE:	Summer 1999

...many, many like a dungeon dragon!

The "Legend" begins on PlayStation. The "Legend of Mana" (LoM) series, which was immensely popular on Super Famicom and Gameboy, finally appears on the best-selling PS hardware. The first of the series, known as "Secret of Mana" in the States for the Super Nintendo, was also a big hit.

Four things make this latest "LoM" stand out from all other fantasy games. First, players choose the main character's sex and their initial equipment. Second, there are more than 10 characters to choose from to make up the player's party. Third, there's a new battle "system." "LoM"'s system is called "Action Edit System," where battles are more action-oriented than other RPGs. Before gameplay begins, players configure their controller by choosing eight actions from a number of choices, and then assigning each action to one of the eight controller buttons.

As players use these buttons, attacks and moves develop into more powerful attacks or different moves. Also, new attacks and moves can be created by combining two actions together. Some actions can only be performed with particular weapons.

"LoM"'s fourth and final new feature is another new system, called "Land Make System." When players acquire an "artifact" from a character or a monster, the mysterious item is placed on the game's world map, creating a "new land" to be explored. Players can create their own storylines as well as their own world maps to conquer. As for what exactly the main storyline is, well, we have very few details regarding LoM's storyline. As always, when we know more, you'll know more. Stay tuned!

"Legend of Mana" is considered one of Square's greatest fantasies, right alongside the "Final Fantasy" and "Saga Frontier" series. Can this latest installment carry on the good name? Never bet against Square!

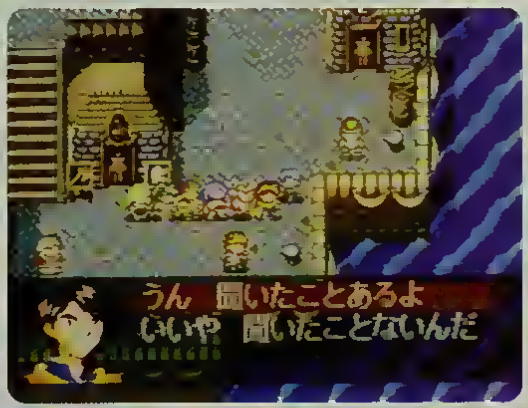
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue

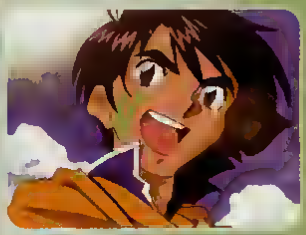
Since the release of "Lunar Silverstar Story" for PlayStation, RPG fans are eagerly anticipating the release of its sequel, "Lunar 2: Eternal Blue." Kadokawa answers the call, but also improves upon the classic RPG, from the graphics to the music.

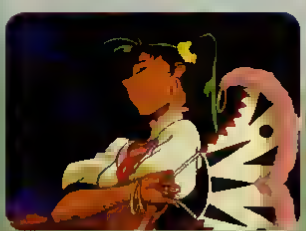
Like the original on the Sega Genesis CD, "Lunar 2" unfolds on a 2D map. The broadcast-quality, anime cut scenes are now more than one hour in length, and feature the voice talents of such famous voice actors and actresses such as Chisa Yokoyama, Megumi Hayashibara and Hikaru Midorikawa. But, like the first "Lunar" installment, as beautiful as the cut scenes are, "Lunar 2"'s story is what draws players in and keeps them hooked.

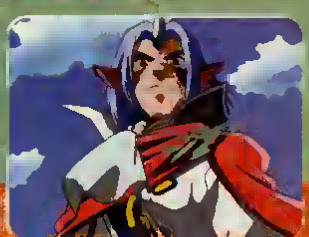
Lunar 2 takes place 1,000 years after the events of Lunar: The Silver Star. Lunar 2's hero, Hiro, and his comic-sidekick baby dragon, Ruby, meet a strange but beautiful girl (aren't they all?), gather friends and allies, and must fight to free the land from the evil Zophar while searching for the goddess Althena. Whew! And that's only the part on the game's surface (just joking! Jeez you're easy!).

The Lunar stories have a reputation for deep character development, plot twists and turns, and heartbreaking downers. For those who've played "Lunar 2" before, revisit old friends while discovering new elements to a familiar rite. For new visitors to the land of Lunar, take a gander at some screenshots by visiting our website (www.toykopop.com), and let the agonizing wait begin.







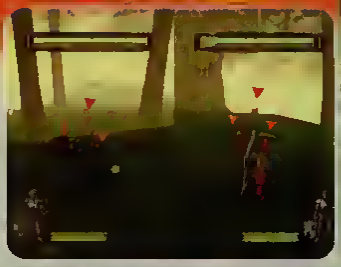


TITLE:	LUNAR 2: Eternal Blue
PLATFORM:	PlayStation
PUBLISHER:	Kadokawa Books/ESP
GENRE:	RPG
REL. DATE:	US-winter 1999

captions:
(top left) Through Hiro, players make many choices, some lightweight, some earth-shattering. Oh the humanity! (top right) Pictured during happier times is the hero of *Lunar 2* Hiro (pronounced "hee-row," as in "hero." Ugh. (upper middle, left) Ronfar, a priest turned gambler, now only prays when tossing the dice. Great role model, eh? (upper middle right) The ever helpful Ruby compares Nall's grandfather, Gwyn, to some old strange woman the party's met. Freak. (middle, left) Lucia, the mysterious girl from the Blue Star, contemplates her love for Hiro. I'm gonna be sick. (middle right) Battle screens display names and number of monsters, as well as heroes and their stats. (bottom) Both a professional dancer AND a deadly martial artist, Jean can kick your butt while wearing a tutu. Why you're wearing a tutu is none of my business. (very bottom) As captain of the order of White Knights, Leo protects the Goddess Althena. And has a horn on his forehead. Weird.

frame GRIDE

above: Knights in shining armor *Frame Gride* style. This isn't no Lancelot or Galahad. We're talking five stories and 80 tons of ass-kicking giant robot! bottom: *Clash of the Titans*! Or, um, *War of the Gargantuas*. No? Would you believe *Robojox*? Okay, how about two overgrown tin-men beating each other with really huge swords? battle sequence. In single- or two-player mode, the action is fast and furious, and the victorious pick over the loser's smoking hulk.



TITLE:	FRAME GRIDE
PLATFORM:	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER:	From Software
GENRE:	VS Battle Action
REL. DATE:	July 1999

[illegible] take [illegible] software's popular *Armored Core* series, where players [illegible] their anime-inspired mecha with different parts and components. *Frame Gride* [illegible] the mecha customization [illegible] several steps further by allowing players to actually create their own specialized parts [illegible] the ultimate in personalized mecha.

Against the CPU or in two-player mode, creating customized parts requires players to defeat [illegible] spoils of war [illegible] "materials." [illegible] sary in the construction of customized-parts creation for mecha and weapons. Players can create all parts and components, including head, chest, arms, legs, and weapons such as guns, swords, and shields.

Frame Gride also features a new system (oh those Japanese and their "systems") known as the "Liberate system." Setting the mecha's "liberate stones," determines its "genus" (fire, water, earth and [illegible] reinforcing the mecha's offense, defense, energy, or speed capabilities.

Besides the "liberate stones" and player-created parts, players can also choose the mecha's color scheme and tonnage. There are three weight classes to choose from: lightweight, which is quick but fragile, heavyweights that are tough and powerful but slow, and a well-balanced middleweight class.

Frame Grides don't go into battle alone. Accompanying them are unmanned support mecha known as "Squires." These little guys come in three varieties: aircraft, walkers, and bombs. Players cannot control Squires as they automatically assist players in aiming, or will sacrifice themselves by shielding the player's mech or blowing themselves up to damage an opponent. A bit extreme but appreciated nonetheless.

Squires are made from "materials," and their "genus" do not necessarily have to complement a player's mecha. Squires belong to the same genus as a player's mech make the best partners. Only [illegible] Squires are available per battle. [illegible] best squires according to [illegible] enemy can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

If *Frame Gride* can deliver on [illegible] ses, and is anywhere near as good as *Armored Core* series, From Software may have another mecha hit on its [illegible] Until then, fire up the power converters, [illegible] up [illegible] atomic batteries, and [illegible]

METAL GEAR INTEGRAL

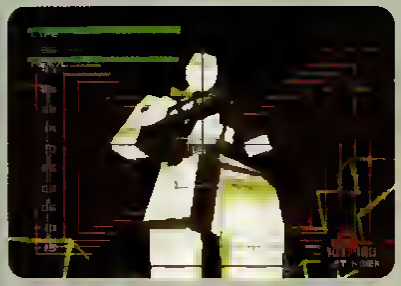
Even before the barrel [illegible] SOCOM 2 has had time to cool, Solid Snake is back. Konami, apparently not satisfied with setting such a high-water mark with *Metal Gear Solid*, has updated the block-buster game and released it as *Metal Gear Solid Integral*. But don't misunderstand. It isn't just a director's cut or an international version. It's both.

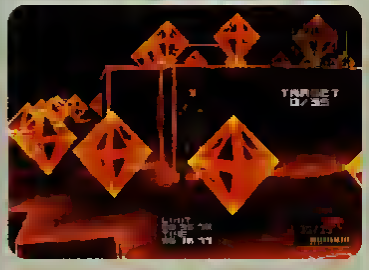
This time players can choose the game's point of view, from either a first- or third-person's P.O.V. The game takes on a whole new angle (literally and figuratively) in first-person P.O.V. As Snake, players find themselves sneaking, running, hiding and fighting. Everything happens in front of and to the player. Think of it as a first-person shooter, *Metal Gear* style.

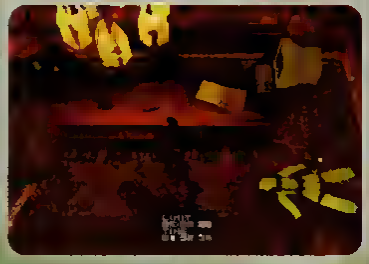
Enemy sentries and patrols have been relocated from the original game, so new tactics are in order for those *Metal Gear* masters. *Metal Gear* beginners will be relieved to know that they can choose from five difficulty levels according to their skill, ranging from "Very Easy," "Easy," "Normal," "Hard," and "Extreme."

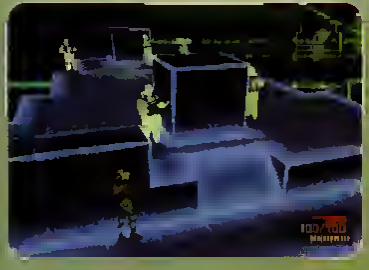
MGS Integral ups its replay value by including a number of new game secrets, including costume changes. When the game is played through [illegible], Meryl gets a stealthy "sneaking" suit, and Snake suits up in a tux. Players will also be able to read messages from the staff at the end of every stage.

For all the hardcore *Metal Gear* heads, *MGS Integral* is a "must have" to their collection. Those who have yet to play *Metal Gear Solid* (and why not?) shouldn't miss the chance to experience the 1998 CESA [illegible] game.









MGS's enigmatic Ninja wears a high-tech stealth suit that renders him invisible, like the Predator from the Alien movie. He's also a cool action figure from McFarlane Toys!

captions

top: In first-person POV Snake can go for those painful and cheap groin shots! Yee-haw! top right: In the "virtual training" mode Snake hones his stealth and marksmen skills. top to bottom: Multiple obstacles keep the "virtual training mode" very "real" for Snake, while offering plenty of challenge for players. An enemy Genom soldier takes a dirt nap, thanks to Snake. Hey nice office! Besides stationary obstacles Snake will face intelligent un friendlies actively searching for our hero in the "virtual training" mode.

TITLE:	Metal Gear Solid INTEGRAL
PLATFORM:	PlayStation
PUBLISHER:	KONAMI
GENRE:	Action
REL. DATE:	Fall 1999 (Japan)

SaGa Frontier 2

by Matt Galgani

The SaGa Saga

SaGa Frontier 2 is the latest installment in Square's second largest RPG Family. Only the *Final Fantasy* series has had more sequels than the *SaGa* series, which includes three chapters on the GameBoy, three more on the Super Famicom, and now, two on the Playstation.

This one has everything we have come to expect from Square including high-quality artwork and music, as well as some serious, high drama, all encompassed in a very long story. *SaGa Frontier 2*'s story spans about 300 years, long enough for several generations of characters to be born, fight and die, only to pass the struggle on to their descendants.

Because of *Saga 2*'s multi-generation gameplay, Square has once again, given us a new "System." Ready for this? Yep. The "Generation System." Due to space constraints, this mini-strategy guide can't cover the entire game, just the first 2 years. Plus, we promise to leave out the spoilers.

Unlike the less-than-popular (in the U.S anyway) *SaGa Frontier*, *SaGa 2* is basically a linear story with several main characters rather than seven separate quests which barely seem to relate to each other. Many of the main characters are descended from King Gustav XII. Players start the game as his son, Gustav XIII, and later on, the player might play as Gustav, son of Gustav, son of Gustav. Get used to it. At an "intermission," players can also switch to the story of William Knights.

This game is a mix of familiar and new *SaGa* features.

Characters have Hit Points, Life Points, Job Points, and Work Points. When a character runs out of HP during a battle, they become unconscious and loose one LP. **(1a-1c)**

In the middle of a battle, players can also spend one LP to get themselves up to full HP. **(2)** Use this feature for characters who are easily hurt, like Kelvin, or when fighting a boss who can take out most of a character's HP in one round.

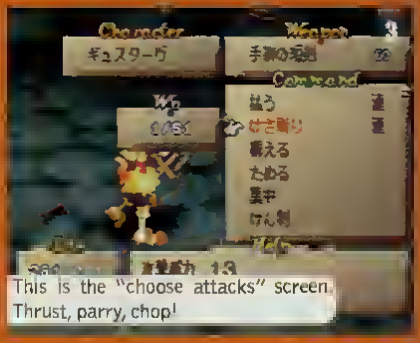
A return of an older *SaGa* feature is that some weapons wear out with use. Wooden swords or shields will need to be replaced from time to time, but steel swords and armor will not wear out. Anyone who played the GB *Final Fantasy Legend* (that was really a *SaGa* game if you didn't already know it) will remember how they wanted to throw the GB out the window when their weapons wore out during a boss battle. That little problem is solved here.

Players can always see where enemies are on screen, and sometimes can avoid a battle. Battles are done in two different ways. The first is the usual turn-based method found in 99% of all RPGs. The other method, used when a character is fighting alone, is to "pre-select" three commands (attacks, healing, defense, etc.), and watch them play out. **(3)** This method comes up as an option in some battles which would give players a chance to "chase away" an enemy.

SaGa 2's characters do not "level-up" like most RPGs, but instead a character's abilities have levels. **(4)** These levels go up after battles, and, during battles, characters will learn new tech-

Gustav is looking kind of dead in this battle sequence.

The Character Stats screen. See, we weren't kidding about needing that Kanji dictionary!


This is the "choose attacks" screen. Thrust, parry, chop!

Each skill has its own level. Remember to develop evenly.

Warning! This is an RPG, filled with lots of Japanese text. Get out your Kanji dictionary.

Warning #2! *SaGa Frontier 2* utilizes Square's newest "anti-mod" boot code, disabling older PlayStation mod chips (that played import games). Import players will need either the newest version of the mod chip (**RHP**) or, with an older mod chip, a **GameShark/Pro Action Replay** peripheral to play this game (see codes section at the bottom of this page).

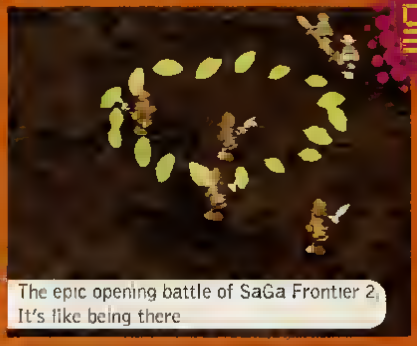
Don't say we didn't warn you.

Character Design by Tomomi Kobayashi. So what? All the characters look like the ones in *Final Fantasy Tactics*–no noses and long arms.

1b

1c

That's gotta hurt!



The epic opening battle of SaGa Frontier 2. It's like being there.

Outside of the caves. Nice, but you wouldn't want to live there.

"No monsters here." Inside the caves. See how it all fits together?

You only have to fight the little mushrooms.

Kelvin's on his way! Kelvin's on his way, to act as a decoy today!

In a touching moment of incredible friendship, Gustav rescues Flin-

During the opening, Gustav XII Congratulates his troops on some well done killin'. Awww

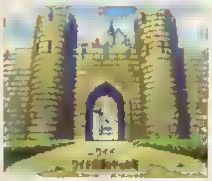
Controls

* Circle makes choices, advances text, general action button.

* X cancels choices.

* Square brings up a menu while not in battle. From the menu players can view character stats, arts, items, etc., and save the game. In battle, players can use LP to regain HP.

* Triangle allows quick save, but has no function during battle.



CAVE INFO

TREASURES 4

MONSTER DATA

Name	HP	LP
Gremlin	480	2
She Bunny	146	2
Slime	253	100
Poren	99	1
Deinorich	153	60

DUNGEON INFO

TREASURES 5

MONSTER DATA

Name	HP	LP
Anima Ruguru	343	1
Evil	219	2
Slime	789	100
Dato Hopper	409	2

GameShark Codes

Boot Code 1 (you MUST use one of these)

D00DC7D61040 800DC7D61000

Boot Code 2

D00DC7D2 0000 800DC7D2 2402

Unlimited Job Points

D01C9C22 2405 801C9C20 0000

Max HP

B01F0070 00000000 8001040C 03E7 B01F0070 00000000 8001040E 03E7

Max Skill level

B01F0070 00000000 3001041D 00FF B01F0070 00000000 8001041E FFFF B01F0070 00000000 80010420 FFFF B01F0070 00000000 80010422 FFFF B01F0070 00000000 80010424 FFFF B01F0070 00000000 80010426 FFFF B01F0070 00000000 80010428 FFFF

Special Character

D01AED50 0063 801AED52 0063

Special Sword

800A7462 FFFF

niques or "arts." As character build up arts, they can equip different combinations. This is also how several characters can combine attacks to build up combos a la *Chrono Trigger*.

Another new feature is that characters can be assigned "roles" during battle, which are not dependent on the type of character. Players can have one character act as a "Decoy" during battle, which draws enemy attacks away from weaker characters, or have a character perform "Diversions," to break up enemy combos.

Story

After winning a battle, King Gustav the XII is informed of the birth of his son. He rushes back to the palace to see the newborn baby and, after checking on the health of his wife, he decides to name the baby Gustav the XIII.

When young Gustav reaches the age of seven, we find out that he has not learned any magic and so he is unable to claim his birthright of the Firebrand Sword. King Gustav is definitely not happy about this and exiles his wife and young son to the western regions of the country.

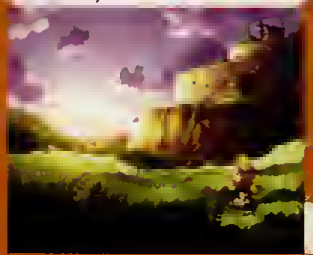
The first 15 years of young Gustav's life do not require much action on the player's part, other that they follow the story. There are caves outside the first town where Gustav spends his teenage years, which can be treated as standard dungeons. Gustav's only friend up to this point has been Flin, who later gets himself captured and players (as young Gustav) must go to the caves to rescue him.

Gustav will be joined by Kelvin once inside the caves. The monsters are fairly easy, so fight all of them and level up a bit. When Kelvin joins the party, keep an eye on his HP during the first battle and don't forget to use an LP if necessary in order to keep him involved in the battle. Use Kelvin's "kinoko" spell for a quick HP fix as needed.

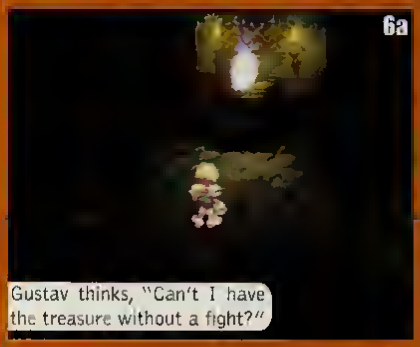
When Gustav reaches the age of 20, he will come across a town which has a stable where players can download PocketStation games. After players load up their PocketStation, Gustav must talk to Kelvin and Flin, located on the second floor of the town's Inn. Once players do this, they will be able to return to the castle. After a conversation scene, players then go to the dungeon below the castle. The entrance to this dungeon is located next to the painting in the back room on the first floor. **(5)**

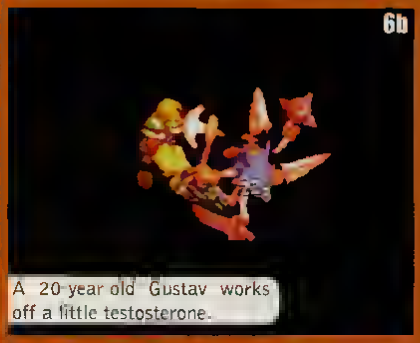
Once Gustav is in this dungeon, he will fight all battles by himself, using the "determine all moves before hand" method. It's a pretty small dungeon, and there is only one puzzle which even your kid brother can figure out. While the puzzle isn't much of a challenge, at least the boss is interesting because he can easily kill Gustav. **(6a & 6b)** He has some strong attacks, so before each turn, check Gustav's HP. If his HP is below 150, use an LP to charge up before selecting attacks. When the boss is defeated, open that big fat treasure chest and exit the dungeon. **(7)**

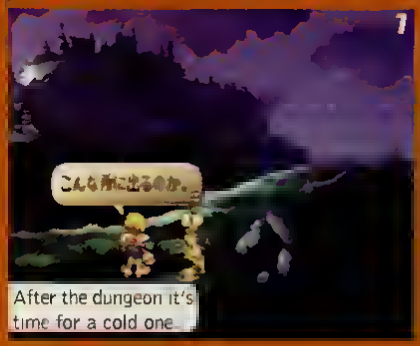
This is only the beginning, and the first 20 years, but it should be enough to get players through their first trial, and familiarized with the controls and menus. With several more generations to go, players can expect to put in some serious game time. So, go, young one. Seek your destiny and remember, save often ★



Par for the course, our hero walks off into the sunset. Awww.







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A.D. POLICE

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Mechanic Design Natsuki Maniya (*Virus*)
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Sound Director: Tomohiko Yoshida (*Princess 9*)
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Editing: Mari Kishi

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Marie Maron:
Takako Kodama (Japanese version of *Full Monty*)
Liam Fletcher:
Toru Furusawa (*Trigun*)

BIG: KENJI AND HANS ARE NOT "NORMAL POLICE" OFFICERS...

LEFT: DESPITE HIS COOL DEMEANOR, KENJI'S AFFECTION FOR KYOKO FORCES HIM TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT EVEN HE NEEDS LOVE.

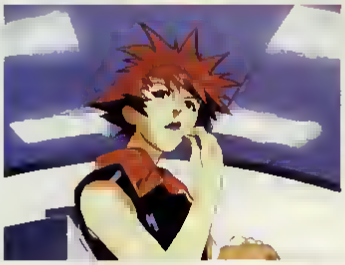
TOP: BY THE ROCKET'S RED GLARE.

BOTTOM: ANOTHER BOOMER GONE BAD...

While the show just began airing on Japanese TV this April, the name *A.D. Police* will have a familiar ring to fans of *Bubble Gum Crisis*. Although it took nine years for this spin off, AIC's new TV anime was born of the three-volume OVA series, *Another Story Bubble Gum Crisis A.D. Police*, put out by Bandai Visual in May 1990 (The English version was relesaed by AnimEigo in 1993.) The storyline of the *A.D. Police* series is based on Tony Takezaki's manga, *A.D. Police 25:00*.

The Story: "I am not normal police."

Neo Tokyo (a.k.a. Mega-Tokyo), 2039: Forty years earlier, a major earthquake destroyed Japan's capital. (If my math is right, that means 1999! Let's hope Takezaki is not a prophet.) To speed the massive reconstruction effort, an industrial conglomerate, Genom Corporation, created powerful synthetic humanoids called "Boomers" (a k.a. Boomas). However, an underground organization known as the Packer Syndicate began manufacturing illicit versions of these giant androids, programming them to commit acts of violence and assist the syndicate in their illegal activities, leading to a drastic increase in crime in Neo Tokyo. Realizing that their existing police force (i.e., the "Normal Police") was ill-equipped to handle the new, high-tech threat, Neo Tokyo created an entirely new police force known as "A.D. Police," whose sole purpose is to combat the Syndicate and its evil Boomers. In time, suspicion begins to fall on the ambitious Genom CEO, Mr. Umihara, and his relationship to the Syndicate, making it difficult to know whom to trust.

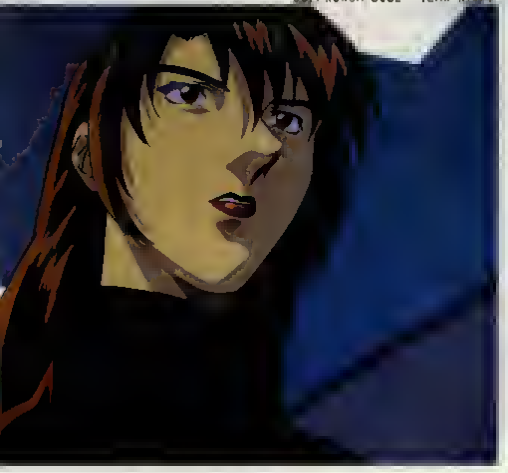


Although the time frame and the existence of Genom and the Boomers follow the *Bubble Gum Crisis* series, *A.D. Police* is an independent work with an entirely different story, like a different animal in the same zoo.

LEFT: MORAL DILEMMA. HOW WILL SATOMI JUGGLE HER DAY-TIME JOB AS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO GENOM'S CEO WITH HER LOVE FOR HANS?

RIGHT: KAREN, KENJI & HANS' SEXY BOSS, TAKES AIM.

TOP RIGHT: YE CALIFORNIANS, LIKE *AD POLICE*'S SPIKY-REDHEAD MARK, ARE TIRED OF BEING PORTRAYED AS WACKY OR WEIRD. "CHA-RUNGA, DUDE." YEAH, RIGHT.



In episode one, we are introduced to the main protagonists, Kenji Sasaki and Hans Kleif. The story begins with Kenji who, by an amazing coincidence, appears at the scene of a man holding a group of people hostage in a building. Kenji identifies himself to the other police, who already have the place surrounded, by proclaiming–in English–"I am not Normal Police." (Why he says this line in English to a bunch of Japanese police in the midst of an urban terrorist event is a little baffling.) After saving the day with some expert marksmanship, Kenji is reprimanded by his superiors for interfering with the Normal Police; as an A.D. Police officer, Kenji's jurisdiction doesn't extend beyond Boomer-related crimes. Flippantly disregarding the reprimand, Kenji's reputation as a rebellious loose-cannon is solidified.

With little time for rest, Kenji and his partner respond to a report of an illegal Boomer. In the ensuing battle, Kenji's partner is critically wounded, his survival in doubt. Depressed by the day's events, Kenji goes to his partner's favorite bar to have a drink in his honor. Despite his desire to be left alone, an obnoxious foreigner demands that Kenji joins him in a drink to celebrate his birthday. All this ends in a fight, with Kenji putting the guy down in short order.

Hung over and depressed, Kenji finds his way to work the next morning, only to discover that the guy he punched out the night before is his new partner, Hans Kleif, formerly a Normal Police officer from Germany.

With the Genom conspiracy and the Boomer battles in the background, the A.D. Police series follows the love-hate relationship of Kenji, an emotionless loner who trusts no one, and his fun-loving, live-for-today partner, Hans. Also thrown into the mix is Kenji's reluctant foray into a romance relationship with Kyoko Miyano, a college student whom he saved from an attack by a Boomer.

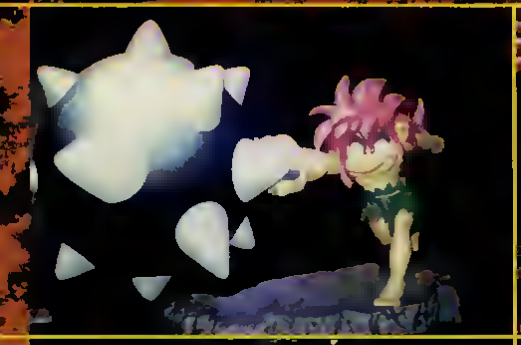
Check it out!

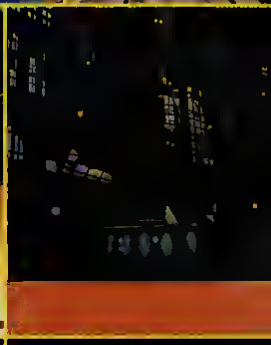
Fans of the *Bubble Gum Crisis* series will certainly want to check out the new dimension *A.D. Police* brings to the Neo Tokyo world. As an additional incentive, we're told that the compilations will include Director's Cut versions, differing from those shown on TV. Although at press time the rights for the English version had not been bought, the Japanese release schedule has been set. Each volume is available on VHS, DVD, and LD.

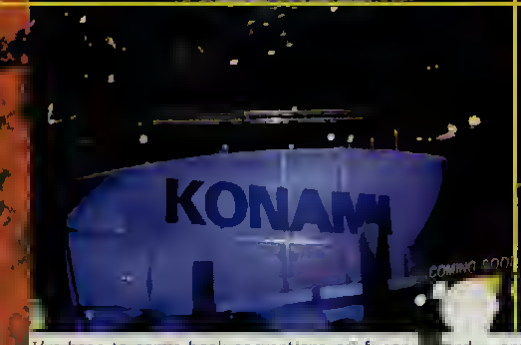
–Matt Galgani

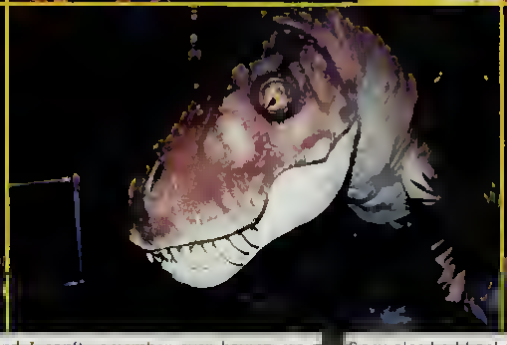
nice movie title btw!

IT'S A MAD, MAD, M
THE STORY OF E









I've been to comic book conventions, sci-fi conventions, and *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* conventions. I even attended the world's first *X-Files* convention (San Diego, summer of '95, and a waste of time). This was my first venture to the Electronics Entertainment Exposition, held May 13-15, at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Aside from the geek factor, these conventions all have one thing in common: the attendees apparently rarely bathe. The assault upon my nose and eyes aside, the words I've used, and most frequently heard from other attendees, to describe E3 were "sensory overload." A mouthful, yet an inadequate description.

E3—Three days and 840,000 square feet of in-your-face sights, ear-drum splitting sounds, music, and P.A.s, gorgeous spokesmodels, pushy company reps, obnoxious attendees, arrogant journalists, miles of walking from convention wing to wing, shoulder-to-shoulder pushing and shoving (approximately 55,000 geeks attended), fast-food priced like nouveau cuisine, and did we mention parking, hah, forget about parking, and... and I can't remember ever having more fun. With my clothes on. Sans peanut butter.

Everyone, and we do mean EVERYONE, was there at this "industry-only" event. The big three, Sony, Nintendo, and Sega, occupied most of the convention center's West Hall, seemingly taking up more real estate than the Oklahoma land rush. Mixx Webmaster Andre Tsurukame noted that Sony's space was so huge that he thought that he had long crossed Sony's borders only to find that several minutes later, he still wandered in Sony-occupied territory.

At the forefront of Sony-land was one of their biggest draws, PlayStation 2. Encased in a six-foot tall, silver pyramid, the PlayStation 2 display allowed sneak peaks at demo videos and playable demos specifically programmed for the show. I only saw a *Grand Turismo 2* demo that played like the original game's FMV cut scenes. Very fast. Very smooth. Looked beautiful. Can't wait.

Sony also had banks and banks of monitors with playable demos of Capcom's *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* and *Dino Crisis* (think *R.E.* with dinos). *R.E. 3* takes place between the events of *R.E.* and *R.E. 2*, following the adventures of S.T.A.R.S. member Jill Valentine trying to escape zombie-infested Raccoon City.

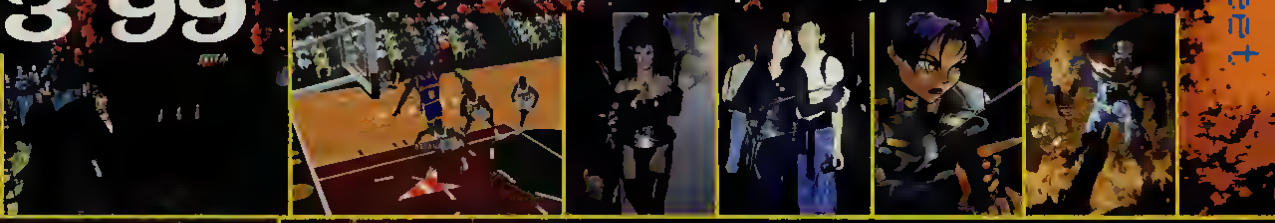
Also drawing huge crowds were the playable RPGs including SquareSoft's opus *Final Fantasy VIII*, and Konami's *Suikoden II* and *Vandal Hearts 2*. Also for the hard-core RPG fans who've been screaming for them, Game Arts' *Grandia* and Enix's *Star Ocean: The Second Story* were playable in demo form. *Um Jammer Lammy*, the sequel to SCEA's *Parappa the Rapper*, got exceptional coverage and playtime at E3, as did Sony's *Spryo 2*. Disney's *Tarzan* follows the animated ape-man's movie adventures from childhood to chest-thumping adult. More monkeys and apes later.

Sega pushed the Dreamcast, obviously. For most of us who haven't spent some $600 to purchase

MAD CONVENTION!

E3 99

(the Electronic Entertainment Expo 1999, yeah baby!)



In imported DC, this was our first chance to get some game time on the machines. With a shipping date on 9/9/99, the DC's launch titles on hand at E3 included *Sonic Adventure*, *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, *The House of the Dead 2*, *Cart Racing*, *NFL 2000* and *NBA 2000* (both working titles), as well as Capcom's *Power Stone* and Namco's *Soul Calibur*.

One of the most highly publicized Dreamcast games is Sega's own *Shen Mue*, and the number of monitors set up for the game and people waiting to play them demonstrated the rewards of good press. I can only tell you that the game looks great because there just weren't enough monitors and too many people playing or waiting to play. I'll have to wait until I get my own copy. Sniff... Tucked away and largely ignored by most, were some cool, life-size *Shen Mue* character busts on display which, I assume, were used for sculpting their computerized images.

Nintendo created quite the buzz with the announcement of their next-generation machine, code-named Dolphin. It'll be a DVD (no more ROM cartridges) machine run off of an IBM 400mhz chip. Yeeha! Look for a release date in 2000.

Game-wise, Nintendo had HUGE areas dedicated to *Star Wars Episode I Racer*, complete with a life-size mock-up of Anakin Skywalker's pod racer, anima-tronic *Star Wars* characters, banks of playable demos, and a huge video screen pushing both the game and movie. According to one Nintendo Rep, master of the Force, George Lucas himself, toured the *Star Wars* booth on Friday. Lots of security that day

Another N64 game taking up plenty of floor-space was *Pokemon*. Nintendo is releasing (deep breath) *Pokemon Stadium* (*P.S. 2* in Japan), *Pokemon Snap*, and *Pokemon Yellow* for the Game Boy. Phew The Pokemon VW Beetle was also parked nearby, and served as a staging area for free Pokemon goodies.

Set apart in its own area, complete with dedicated spokesmodels in black leather jackets, tight white pants, and knee high boots, and playing on about 30 demo stations was *Perfect Dark*. *Perfect Dark*, a game from the creators of *Goldeneye*, follows the adventures of special agent Joanna Dark on various missions to rescue yet another hapless scientist in the year 2023. A multi-player option and the ability to load the player's face onto his/her persona (via Game Boy Camera) make for a very cool game.

In the South Hall were many of the biggest third-party companies. South Hall also held the more bizarre sights of E3, including fully-clothed, talking monkeys and half-naked humans in a cage (Fox Interactive's *Planet of the Apes*), Lara Croft, WCW wrestlers wrassling in a mini-ring (Electronics Arts), Lara Croft, the *Jade Cocoon* mascot girls (Crave Entertainment), Lara Croft, a life-size, wrecked bus (Activision's *Vigilante 8*), and Lara Croft.

Big-time third-party publisher Capcom had plenty of playable demos of the *Resident Evil* games,

including *R.E. Code: Veronica Code Veronica* follows *R.E. 2*'s Claire Redfield's European adventures in her continuing search for her brother, *R.E.*'s Chris Redfield. Playable versions of *Dino Crisis*, *Power Stone*, and *Street Fighter/Marvel/Capcom/everyone-else-in-the-universe Vs* fighting games were also burning plenty of wattage.

Eidos pushed mascot Lara Croft (model Lara Weller), but also had huge banks of playable product. Among the notables were *Fear Factor*, *Saboteur*, and *Onikron*. All are third-person action-adventure games, and each has a definite anime-influenced look. Look to future issues of Tokyo Pop for more info.

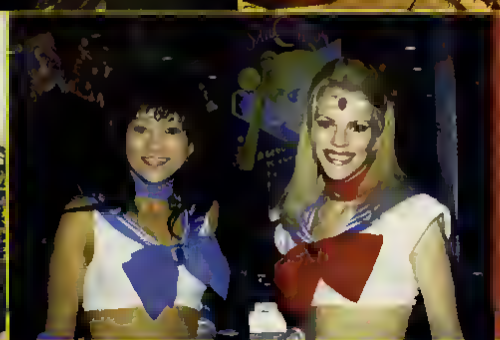
A staff favorite was the Lego area. They had plenty of colorful building blocks to play and build stuff with. A big plus was giving away free Lego building blocks. Staff guy Henry Liao nearly gave the cute little Lego mascot a concussion, thinking he was merely a display model. Lego was pushing their interactive 3D construction sets. Neat stuff.

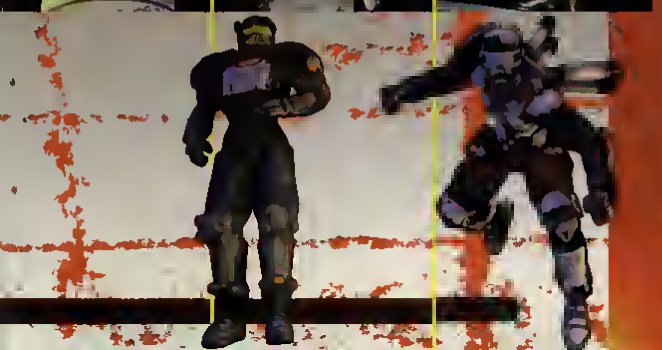
Mixx Entertainment, Inc. held court in Kentia Hall, located beneath South Hall, surrounded by nearly 150 other vendors. Larry "NFMS-1" Ware flew all the way from Eastpoint, GA to once again serve as Mixx DJ. Allen Pu and Brandon Davis of Holoplex loaned Mixx and manned one of their *Combatica* arcade games.

Combatica is essentially a fighting game without a joystick. Instead of slamming a joystick and mashing buttons, players stand in front of motion sensors and actually punch, kick, jump, and duck to perform attacks, blocks, and combos. A great workout and quite the crowd pleaser. Allen and Brandon loaded two games for our fighting pleasure, *Street Fighter EX2* and *Tekken 3*. Thanks guys!

When it all was said and done, I stumbled home (at 70mph), barely able to focus. My family and friends asked for my impressions of E3. "Sensory overload," came my weary and bleary-eyed reply. "What were some of the cool games?" asked my friends. A long silence, some head scratching, and finally, "I don't remember. There was so much," was all I could muster.

After a sound, verbal thrashing by my friends, I took a long, hot shower, and prepared for bed. Needing to unwind a little, I cranked up the PlayStation. Ahh. A perfect ending to a perfect weekend. Check out Tokyo Pop's website (www.tokyopop.com) for a photo tour of E3.





fun facts, gossip, and out right lunacy

There were a couple, okay a few, no, actually, a lot of strange and curious things I noticed and questioned while attending E3. Here's a short list:

I've already stated it, but it warrants repeating; bathing is a good thing! When going out in public, especially to a convention the size of E3, bathing should be a requirement, nay, a violently enforced law. Video-game journalists in particular should discover the wonders of soap and water!

Members of the video-game media are as parasitic as a struggling Hollywood actor when it comes to free food. They're like a swarm of locust or school of piranha. There was nothing but ice, chilled pats of butter, dredges of coffee, and some lemonade left once the press got done with the media-only free food. Scavengers...

–Media badges get you lots of wanted and unwanted attention, undeserved respect, and cool as well as cheesy free stuff without really trying. Except parking. On that note...

–Don't drive to E3 on the first day after 10:00 a.m. thinking you're going to find parking. Just not going to happen. In a related story...

Saw a human leech charging $50 for all-day parking in front of his shop's garage, located across the street from the L.A. Convention Center. What a generous human being.

Overheard one video-game journalist sarcastically wondering why Nintendo was pushing its *Star Wars Episode I Racer* game at this time (pre-*The Phantom Menace* premiere). Oh what witty characters these journalists be.

Also overheard chimpanzee "Cornelius" mentioning "free sandwiches" to "Zira" at the Fox Interactive *Planet of the Apes* exhibit. Weird seeing a simian worrying about free food. On the other hand, no one questions a talking and clothed monkey in Hollywood...

–Speaking of monkeys (no offense Tom), I got to meet Tom Root Jr. of ToyFare Magazine, one my favorite writers from one of my favorite rags! Cool! Read Tom's FanFare letters column as well as "Twisted Mego Theatre" for some great belly laughs. See, if you read Wizard or ToyFare, you'll get the "monkey" reference. And pie.

–The lovely-and-talented Tokyo Pop national ad director and Smile Magazine publisher/editor Susan Jaget can get just about anything she wants with a smile. We hate her.

–A Kids Gap backpack will hold nearly 30 pounds of video-game press kits and material.

–A Tokyo Pop journalist's back cannot hold 30 pounds of video-game press kits and material for very long.

Sony had the biggest press kit known to man. Thanks a lot Sony! You'll be getting a bill from my chiropractor.

–Press kits on CDs are the way to go.

–Adults become vultures and cannibalistic when it comes to free goodies. Teeshirts, hats, posters, Pokemon beanbags, Lara Croft's sweat, whatever. Common courtesy and human decency go right out the window. It's every man and woman for himself or herself. Parasites...

–Eidos brought video-game promotion to a new high (?) with more curvaceous spokesmodels (not including Lara Weller as mascot Lara Croft) than any other vendor there.

–Fat-ass and acne-covered geeks are in heaven at E3 because beautiful women will actually talk to and put their arms around smelly carcasses for a picture they can show off to their pathetic friends who couldn't con their way in.

–The E3 people are very strict when it comes to allowing minors entry. Yeah, right. We saw schools of kids taking up valuable video-game testing time. Most got in by attaching themselves to someone connected to either a vendor or a member of the press. For those who are dying to go next year, buddy up with one of the above mentioned personnel. What is generally kept secret is that most vendors get guest passes in addition to the passes used for their own personnel. A vendor can give these passes to anyone. Anyone.

–Having said that, don't believe everything you read on an attendee's E3 badge. The badge of one guy we entertained at the Mixx booth stated that he worked for DreamWorks. He later confessed that his buddy put in false credentials for him, under the Spielberg Katzenberg Geffen mega corp, just so he could get great perks. And it worked too!

–Los Angeles is home to the most beautiful women in the world, most seen at E3. And not all of them were spokesmodels.

To all you out-of-towners who rented or borrowed cars during your stay in our fair city, those really lousy drivers on the streets of L.A. were you, and not the locals. Once you were gone, the streets of L.A. returned to their normal, traffic-free, polite-and-courteous asphalt nirvana.

At Nintendo's pre-E3 media-event, Jake "Anakin Skywalker" Lloyd showed up to help introduce *Star Wars: Episode I Racer* to an audience of jaded video-game press slime. The charming young actor drew more applause than anything else revealed at Nintendo's press-only gathering, igniting a historical moment of humanity in the bitter video-game journalists.

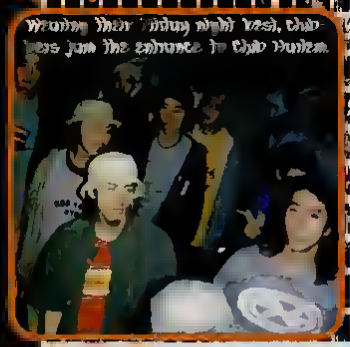
–Shigeru Miyamoto bumped an interview with us so he could meet with George Lucas (see above) and Steven Spielberg (Saturday). Well, if it had to be anyone, we can understand George and Steve.

important information * important information * important information

Harlem

Club:
Location: 2-4 Maruyama-cho, Shibuya, Tokyo

"tokyo massiv"


Waiting their turn to get into Club Harlem's DJ booth, these girls pose in the entrance to Club Harlem.

The DJ booth at Club Harlem's DJ works his magic atop a 15-foot tall platform.

By the look of it these young ladies, they must serve mighty short drinks at Club Harlem.

Female Harlem patrons unleash their fighting spirit by showing off their sexy dance moves for anyone who cares to watch.

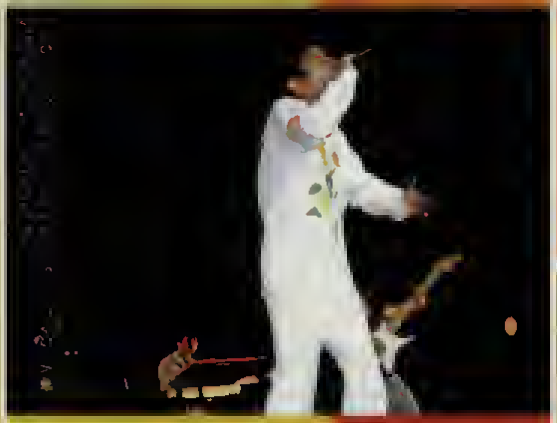
Hmmm... Maybe the drinks aren't strong enough at Club Harlem...

If you're into clubbing, Tokyo is one city you must visit. Across the globe, there are people who search for happening clubs, usually those who require less sleep than I do. They trot from Amsterdam to Madrid to Rio to New York... and to Tokyo.¶ Japanese young people have always been into the elements that make a cool club scene—music, design, fashion, and dancing. Depending on the club, the DJ, and the crowd, every night attracts different cliques. The club-goers range from "teamers," who are basically gangs without guns, to club-going students, to throes of partying 20-somethings looking to shed their stress and inhibitions.¶ Just down the street from the "love hotel" section of Shibuya, a district known as the wildest part of Tokyo for many reasons, a flourishing club scene has popped up around the live houses On Air East and On Air West, both venues for many popular bands and wall-to-wall crowds. Right across the street, you can find Club Asia, Python, and Harlem, as well as others. Strapped with a Tokyo Pop camera, we hit the floors of Harlem to check out the city's most popular pure hip-hop joint.¶ We arrived around midnight to find a short line leading us to a packed dance floor and bar area in a relatively small club, by U.S. standards. The dance floor itself is big enough to handle about three hundred (I didn't count...) bass-heads, mainly bobbing on their own. The second story loft, featuring the club's second bar, is definitely the best place to kick back and chill out, away from the constant elbow-to-elbow found below.¶ There was barely any boy/girl bootie-bumpin' like you'd see in the States, but a fair amount of girls were on the floor with their friends. It's funny to watch these girls imitating the hip-hop dancing guys, whereas their American counterparts dance more like freaks. If you ask a few of the girls to take their photo for a magazine, they'll quickly throw up their signs for the pose (to them this is fashion—they aren't really in gangs).¶ As you can see by the photos, Tokyo-street youths are not afraid to dress the part. Some of the locals hanging around Harlem look more hip-hop than hip-hoppers here in the States.¶ The most amazing scene isn't inside the club, but rather outside of Harlem and neighboring club Python. The Tokyo dress-code for hard-core club-goers is so out-there it makes raves look tame. Imagine a Hawaiian-style tube dress laced with a flower lei, flower headband, beads, neon-sparkle eye make-up, neon lipstick, hair beads, and glowing earrings, not to mention three or four neon glowing accessories for the cell phone. Now you've got an image of the hard-core Tokyo party girl of 1999. Since these girls literally glow in the dark, they can be seen from a distance coming down a dark street.¶ The guys tend to keep their hair long, with casual skater tees and quarter length baggy shorts or baggy pants. Both girls and guys dye their hair various colors, the latest trend being a sparkling silver that immediately ages one by forty years.¶ Back to the Harlem scene, DJs are worshipped in Japan and, as if to put their DJ on a pedestal, Harlem's DJ table is perched 15 feet above the floor. I literally had to climb up and stand on a barstool to shoot the main DJ. Harlem features DJ battles as well as top-notch Japanese and American hip-hop DJs. This Friday night featured "Daddy's House Special" and DJs Master Key, Kensei, and Yukijirushi. The J-Soul Brothers were scheduled to perform, but they hadn't arrived by 2:00 a.m., when I left.¶ There was, however, a mammoth line that had formed outside the club to get in (and this was at 2:00 a.m.!). You have to give props to a hip-hop club that flies in Marley Marl as a guest.¶ At any rate, Harlem is hoppin', and if you head out to Tokyo and need to spend the wee hours at a place with bumpin' bass and plenty of hotties, make sure you stop by Harlem.

—by Stu Levy

the BOOM

10TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT TOUR-NO CONTROL 5/25/99 AT THE BUDOKAN



The music of the Boom has long been an eclectic journey in the Budokan, as their 10th-anniversary concert tour, "No Control." Like the band's history, the [illegible] included a wide variety of music, ranging from pop rock ("Kimi ha TV ko," My Little TV Girl) to ska ("Ayakutachi sureba kotae ga wakaru," Standing in My Shoes You'd Understand the Answer) to Okinawa folk music ("Bohyo," Makeshift Grave).

Using a deliberately simple, unaccoutered stage, the band played for nearly two hours, performing a 19-song set and two encores. Dressed all in white with black shoes, the band looked like something out of *A Clockwork Orange*, as they were flooded with lights in various hues of blue, red, and green.

In the 10 years since their debut, the Boom, especially singer/songwriter, Kazufumi Miyazawa, has continued on a musical journey that has exposed them to the sounds of Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil, Jamaica, Okinawa, and many other disparate regions. Kazufumi and the Boom have recorded and performed with such international musicians as Singaporean Dick Lee and Jamaican singer Yami Bolo, and have often incorporated elements from these musical adventures into their own albums–all while still putting out more straightforward J-pop tunes.

This eclectic approach was evident the night we caught up with them in Tokyo. About one-third of the song list came from their most recent release, *No Control* (May 1999) [see the review in this issue], while the remainder was pulled mainly from earlier albums such as *A Peacetime Boom* (1989), *Siren no Ohisama (Princess of the Sirens)* (1989), *Japaneska* (1990), and *Faceless Man* (1993). Like most of their albums, from one tune to the next, we never knew what kind of music to expect. (Well, that's kind of untrue, as members of the press, we had the pre-printed song list, but you get the point...) In fact, the only constant throughout each tune was guitarist Takashi Kobayashi who, seemingly oblivious to the type of music being played, was continually head-banging, as if he was auditioning for Metallica.

But while we may have been watching Kobayashi, the eyes of the predominantly female audience were focused on lead singer Miyazawa,age 33. Very polished at the mike, Miyazawa often had his approximately 12,000 fans enchanted as he waxed nostalgic about the last 10 years and told stories between tunes. Every ballad had the audience swaying slowly, with many of the women lip-syncing along.

With the extremely well-behaved crowd and the relatively mellow demeanor of the band, "No Control" seemed an odd name for the tour. Given the international and eclectic selection of music, perhaps "No Borders" would have been more appropriate. But whatever the name, the music is what counts, and the Boom delivered with the unique repertoire they have put together over the last decade.

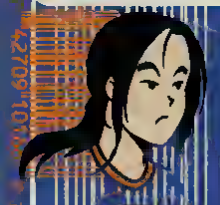
Scorecard

ANIME X Review

> Anime X Review Crew

> Welcome to Anime X Review, your guide to what's new, what's good, and what's bad in the world of Anime. In order to help you find the anime of your dreams the Mixx review staff offers their opinions and some general information about every title. Enjoy!

CRITICAL CHARACTER CREW



brian kaya

Brian's the "magazine's" FNG "NG" stands for "new guy." You can fill in the "F" Friendly, frighteningly fashionable, funny forthright? We're sure you can come up with better ones.

andre tsurukame

henry

The intern! Henry is our spot illustrator, weird animal noises and hoop updates on the internet. He's a multi-talented freak.

hunan the mudcarp assassin

Cloaked in mystery, Hunan's past and present are unknown quantities. His reviews are also a mystery.

Original Animation Video

SECRET AGENT AIKA

Naked Mission & Lace In Space

U.S. Manga Corps

genre: [illegible] | release date: now

translation: dub | length: [illegible]

hot spot: cleverly suggestive

[illegible]: graphically obvious

translates: all too well

[illegible]: NOT FOR KIDS!

With more panties than a Victoria Secret catalog, Aika's story is of secondary (if at all) importance. "Minor" points like who "Secret Agent" Aika is an agent for or how she got her magical bodice, are not resolved. Throw in some soda-masochism and incest, and you got some quality family viewing! The voice actor for the male lead sounded like Dudley Do-Right. Perfect. But other than laughing at the ridiculous amounts of panty shots and a few great slapstick gags, there isn't a whole lot of entertainment here.

If there were awards for cinematography for anime, I'd vote for this flick. The use of "camera" angles in the various "shots" of this anime were very imaginative and gives new meaning to the term, worms-eye view. The rest of the tape is fairly ordinary, the voice dubbing is ok, the storyline of an evil guy trying to depopulate earth so he can fill it with beautiful girls sounds intriguing at first but quickly gets old. Gee, I think I went without saying the words "girl's undergarments" once in this review.

Sigh. This is high quality Playboy-style anime with girls in short skirts running all over the place. The camera angles were "tastefully" selected to reveal the mysteries under each of the female characters skirts (and I do mean every one of them). It's very distracting, if you know what I mean, and it kept me from really paying attention to the story aspect of the show. The animation quality is top notch, but the way it exploits the female body is just unacceptable.

I value honesty and [illegible] above all else. That said, I must admit that the only reason I liked this video enough to give it [illegible] because it features a heretofore unheard of number of scenes of girl's underwear and buttocks. Usually the girls are in rather silly [illegible] positions. The story of *Secret Agent Aika* is entirely forgettable so don't look to me for an in-depth critique. If the story structure, writing, or "marvelous" plot devices [illegible] weren't any. The only thing that exists in this [illegible] is worth your time and money are the highly amusing [illegible] of white panties. If that's your type of thing then *Agent Aika* is for you.

Original Animation Video

HYPERSPEED GRANDDOLL

U.S. Mongo Corps

genre: sci-fi | release date: now

translation: dub | length: 90 mins

hot spot: cool mechs

[illegible]: voice acting

translates: been there

[illegible]: seen it

Oh, how disappointing! What I had hoped was another parody on the super-teenage-girl-saving-the-world end-up being just another derivative super-teenage-girl-saving-the-world anime. It actually started out VERY promising, but, once the sappy romantic angle was introduced, it quickly went downhill. Ugh. Too bad, because there were some great guys and terrific mecha designs. Really, check out *Galaxy Fraulein Yuna* for an amusing take on the overdone, cute-to-death genre.

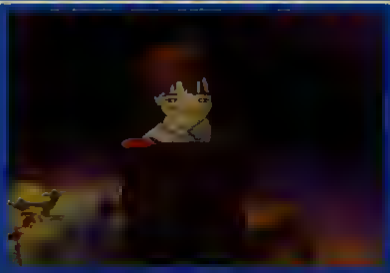
The only thing "hyperspeed" about this title is the speed you'll want to hit the fast-forward button on your VCR deck as soon as you watch this tape. The premise of the series adds nothing new to an already overly familiar one—a super-powered squeaky-voiced schoolgirl must save the planet from aliens. The dubbed version I saw had horrible voice acting—Hikaru's best friend's voice sounded like a 50-year-old woman instead of a young teen. Watch *Galaxy Fraulein* for a much better and funnier take on the same theme.

This is one of those animes that really needs to remain in the original Japanese language (shouldn't they all be?), compared to the well-dubbed anime out there (there are actually some "well-dubbed," you say?) The voice acting in *Granddoll* is absolutely horrendous. The voices are seriously out of synch with the animation. It reminds me of a *Speed Racer* or other earlier, dubbed anime, maybe even worse. The battlesuit designs are really cool and animation quality is decent. But even cool mecha can't save *Granddoll* from terribly done voices.

As if *Sailor Moon* wasn't bad enough, here comes *Granddoll* to the rescue! I know many of Tokyopop's readers enjoy *Sailor Moon* and other such crap, but personally, I can't stand stuff like that! Nothing is worse than the high-pitched shrieks of badly dubbed out female characters running around in ridiculously short suits of armor. Look at her armor! There's a vulnerable point from her neck down! Is [illegible]. One [illegible] quick [illegible] by a stray like me and she's out. At least the world put an end to this miserable video.

Scorecard

Original Animation Video
Serial Experiments: lain
NAVI
Pioneer



genre:	release date:
sci-fi	now
translation:	length:
dub	100 min.

hot spot: original story

needs help: too short!

translates: deep story

grab bag: very timely

Think of William Gibson's "cyber"-fiction and *Ghost in the Shell*, and you get the story and the tone for *lain*. This one's a winner, for story, visuals, and characters. Though only the first episode, viewers can't help but feel empathy for little Lain. Deeper than most anime in story and character, *lain* is also haunting in visuals and tone. It questions what life really is, where it starts and where it ends. Half-a-point off for not being subtitled, but otherwise, can't wait for the next installment!

TV Series
FIST OF THE NORTHSTAR
Vol. 1
Manga Entertainment

genre:	release date:
martial arts	now
translation:	length:
subtitled/dub	75 min.

hot spot: "You're already dead"

needs help: not for the squeamish

translates: spot on

grab bag: perfection

Though dated, North Star STILL entertains. Martial arts! Apocalyptic, "Road Warrior"-like backdrop! Furious fight scenes! Bruce Lee's battle-cry! Exploding heads and bodies! Good triumphing over evil (thanks to exploding heads and bodies)! Deathstrikes that take longer to say than to actually execute (a thousand fists of the crooked monkey fingers!)! But that kid sidekick with the bad haircut drives me nuts. Gotta get a pair of shears to give him a "Super Cuts" makeover. And this coming from a guy with hair longer than yours!

Original Animation Video
PING PONG CLUB
Goes Too Far
Software Sculptors

genre:	release date:
comedy	now
translation:	length:
subtitles	120 mins

hot spot: outrageous humor

needs help: really bizarre

translates: sooo weird

grab bag: NOT FOR KIDS!

Um, yikes. I had to shower after watching this one. This is sort of like a car wreck—you can't help but watch. There's some outrageous humor here, but also some stuff that, well, I needed to shower... in a solution of anti-bacterial disinfectant! I can't recommend this for little kids, and, well, I'm not sure exactly who I can recommend it for. But, I have to say, when the next episode comes in, I'll be there, watching it. I'm sick. I need help.

One word—frickin' cool. Okay that's two words, but this hope deserves copious amounts of accolades. Yeah baby! I loved the mysterious and eerie storyline of a dead girl sending e-mails, the abstracted scenes of nature and urban life, and the awesome character design. The pacing of this episode was slow, but I didn't mind because the artwork is just plain beautiful—stylish with a great use of minimal color.

Imagine a *Mad Max*-ian dystopian future filled with armies of thickly-muscled martial artists and you'll get an idea what this classic TV show is about. I can't say how much I love this series—pure and unadulterated action. The character design is misproportioned and oddly drawn, the action excessively violent, and the main hero is a Bruce Lee wanna-be, but somehow it all works. Put this on your "must see" list or feel the wrath of my "deadly fist of lingering regret!"

Comedy that is both extremely funny and shockingly disgusting is a rare combination and *The Ping Pong* club serves it right to you in this new 2-hour tape. Anything from gender bending to bad body order is suitable subject matter. It will rattle your sensibilities, make you laugh out loud, and make you want to throw up. If you liked the movie *Something about Mary* then this might be your cup of tea. Personally I can't wait to see future tapes.

The best anime I've seen in a while. The story is interesting, the art is very good, and the voice acting isn't bad. The thing is probably the most apparent combination of hand-drawn and computer-animation in any anime, which really gave it a distinct look. The style of the artwork reminds me of Moebius, Miyazaki Hayao, and *Final Fantasy Tactics*, all of which I really admire. Many may gripe that this anime doesn't contain any mecha nor girls in revealing costumes. But that's why the show stands out. It's definitely an anime worth a look.

I remember being very fond of *F.O.I.N.S.* when I was very young. It may have been because my exposure to anime was limited then compared to today, and that I was naive enough to accept more simple storylines. I remember, always cheering for Ken to win his fights and hoping he'd get back to Yuria. Looking at the TV series now, it kind of ruined my good memories a bit. The animation quality isn't that great with its out-of-control proportioned characters and repeated frames. The stories tend to drag a bit, as do all TV anime series. This is probably more of a collectors item for the fans.

Being very familiar with the anime culture (aren't we all?) I thought I could accept any type of "hentai" performance I was curiously writing. This show is absolutely funny to the bone, with sick humor equivalent to our home-grown *South Park*. The plot is simple: pubescent, high-school boys doing whatever they can to get as much and any sort of physical contact with beautiful girls as much as possible. Some of the things they do really amused me, but those who aren't familiar with this kind of anime may take a while to get used to it. Check it out.

Once in a while art actually touches upon the cold, barren, and rocky shores of what passes for my heart. I've seen things you people wouldn't believe and they left a mark. BUT, *lain* was thrust upon me not too long ago and I have actually felt less like killing than I normally would. The story is subtle and interesting. The character design is also very delicate and the interaction between the cell drawn characters and their off-times CGI backgrounds is gorgeous. Were I you, I would run out and find this as soon as possible. *lain* is a masterpiece and I wouldn't want anyone to miss this one.

Ha! What did you think I was going to give this collection of artistic death-dealing ballet? Now you will get a glimpse into what it is like to be me, the Manicarp Assassin! While many of the moves used in *Fist Of The North Star* are a bit much I did enjoy the severity of the violence. No one really limps off to hide in this one, you're either dead or alive. Lead Kenshiro is the type of fighting partner anyone would be proud to roll with. He even has an endless supply of red shirts and Mad Max jackets. Study this video and you too will understand the powers of The North Star! Kill!

If I told you that *The Ping Pong Club* was stupid beyond belief and that it was generally an insult to the intelligence of every living thing on the planet I would still be understating the effect of this series. Perverts, freaks, idiots, and a couple of normal kids make up the ping pong club. You can see the comedic potential already, can't you. I actually enjoyed this series because it was so beyond my normal scope of experience (serious mayhem, possession/me, martial arts, stoicism, etc) that it was like looking into a lunatic's mind. *The Ping Pong Club* is actually funny, but in a really sick and stupid sort of manner. Pay special attention to the relationship between Maruo and Lemme. Odd.

scorecard

X-Review

Web X-Review is the place where you can find your favorite anime characters reviewing Web sites in a kewl, cutting-edge format. Don't forget what "X-Review" means, and no, it's not a porno rating, you perverts! It stands for "CROSS-REVIEW" since these reviews are set up like a cross-section. Remember, you're "searching the net," not surfing. Peace!

CRITICAL CHARACTER CREW

Nate

Harlem Beat's Nate's three hobbies are shootin' hoops, watchin' anime, and girlz. How does he find time for the Web?

Carrot

Carrot takes a break from getting his butt kicked and oggling women to wax poetic about the Internet. Cool.

Shin

As if Lefty wasn't enough trouble, now Shin's got web review duty as well!

Ferrio

Even though he's busy trying to save Empire, Ferrio still finds time to write for Mixx Zine!

fan site	online resource
Bubba Fett	Japanese Pop Music
www.imagesmith.com/lost footage	www.jpopmusic.com

CATEGORY:	UPDATES:	CATEGORY:	UPDATES:
fansite	uh, updates?	music	occassionally
GRAPHICS:	CONTENT:	GRAPHICS:	CONTENT:
nice layout	Star Wars parody	good layout	J-pop info
WIRED: Bubba Fett		WIRED: MP3 apps	
TIRED: morginal humor		TIRED: lacking artists	
SPEED: good enough		SPEED: pretty quick	
LINK: no links, no love		LINK: links?	

You'd have to be an absolute *Star Wars* nut to be able to sit through this site. This site is a fan written parody of the movie about the older brother of bounty hunter Boba Fett. Being a fan of the movie myself, I still couldn't get myself to read the large amount of text on this site! However, anyone with an insatiable appetite for *Star Wars* may find this "side story" more interesting. Overall, I think the graphics are boring, and the fan fiction wasn't worth my time.

If you're interested in Japanese pop music, or a fan of Hikaru Utada, the front page will catch your eye. After looking around a bit, you'll likely find the site either uninformative. It features three relatively new singers/performers, one of whom barely speaks any Japanese and had a horrible singing career to explore before she started posing for nude photos. The "Latest JPOP Rankings" of top 10 singers & albums is a nice touch, but it hasn't been updated for weeks. I quickly found myself rather bored of the site.

You thought you saw all of the *Star Wars* missing footage when the Special Edition was released a couple of years ago? Well, new photos and storyboards have been discovered showing the pivotal role of Bobba Fett's trailer-park living, beer-drinking, pot-bellied, white-trash brother Bubba Fett. A very funny site that shows the lighter side of the Dark Side. May the farce be with you!

A bare-bones look at what's hot in the world of J-pop music. What struck me the most was the placing of both Backstreet Boy's *Millennium* and Britney Spears' *Baby One More Time* in the Top 10 Albums category, proving that American crap music has no geographic boundaries.

I'm not a hardcore *Star Wars* fan, so much of the humor on this site was lost on me. Graphically, the site is neat because of the use of the browser frames to simulate a cockpit view. If you are a major fan of Boba Fett then go ahead and get a chuckle out of learning about his little brother sibling, Bubba Fett.

Knowing next to nothing about Japanese Pop music, this site is a nice intro to the scene. I really like the graphic design and layout, featuring lots of colorful pics of various bands. Unexpectedly cool and especially helpful is the Audio Tech Center which is a guide to the various MP3 players applications available on the Internet. The only gripe I have is that the site only features three bands, but they promise more to come.

The Bubba Fett joke wears thin so much faster than you can even imagine. Faster than the speed of light would still be too slow to catch up with this site's plummet to the ground. This site, while being amusing to those of you out there who still think milk coming out of your nose is funny, is a monument to the ills of the Internet: bad sites by people with too much time on their hands. The drawings of Bubba Fett aren't even done well. I'd love to whack the people responsible for this with my sword.

I don't really listen to J-Pop too much. There really isn't time for that sort of thing while you're out battling beasts and saving damsels in distress. If you do listen to J-Pop then check out this site. It's fairly well-organized and of middling interest even to a rouge like me. I dunno, I just ain't that interested in anything here. It looks nice, though. Ah, forget it, I'm off to a battle.

e-zine	design site	fan site
Otaku	Shift	Star Wars
www.otakuezine.com	www.shift.jp.org	www.asciimation.co.nz/index.html

CATEGORY:	UPDATES:	CATEGORY:	UPDATES:	CATEGORY:	UPDATES:
e-zine	manthly?	e-zine	manthly?	fan site	frequent
GRAPHICS:	CONTENT:	GRAPHICS:	CONTENT:	GRAPHICS:	CONTENT:
great layout	Asian interests	techno hip	J-pop/digital info	ascii simple	Star Wars parody
WIRED: sites and sounds		WIRED: flash animation		WIRED: Star wars asciimation	
TIRED: chappy navigation		TIRED: Spartan layout		TIRED: half a movie	
SPEED: okay		SPEED: like a cheap watch		SPEED: like a bunny	
LINK: link challenged		LINK: like a telephone		LINK: down for the count	

Once you're logged on, this site grabs your attention really quickly with its cool animation and very well designed hyperlinks. I especially liked the little touch of animated effects the web guys added to the pages. It kept me from losing interest. You can also find out what the fast times are in each link by moving the mouse pointer to it, which saves a lot of unnecessary wait time for loading. If there's anything to gripe about, it'd be the lack of pictures to accompany the articles, which were the only turnoff on the site. A well planned graphic design made what could've been a boring site worth while to browse around.

A word of advice to web developers who wish to receive lots of hits and accolades/comments on their websites: the attractive moving graphics! SHIFT Magazine is one of the better planned and designed Japanese websites I've seen. The moving graphics are very cool, and the fonts, though there are a ton of them, are easy on the eyes. The option of looking at the website in English is definitely a nice touch for those who can't read Japanese. The content is rich, although I do wish I knew more about Japanese culture so at least the subjects I am reading about would make more sense. A great site for those who wish to keep up with the current pop culture on the other side of the ocean.

Every *Star Wars* fan must check out this site. It contains Episode IV... in ascii! Many may question how it was done, but asciimation? It was done surprisingly well, based on the graphic limitations (can we even call it graphics?). One has to wonder though, how much the website developer loves *Star Wars* to find the time to make such an awesome asciimation. The dude's got mad skills!

A hot looking e-zine that caters to the otaku in all of us. Great graphics, cool animations, and fun content all converge to make a website you'll go back to again and again. Add a couple of naked girls and there would be no need to surf another site!

A cool site dedicated to the coolest J-pop sites on the web. What it lacks in design is more than compensated for in content. Okay, so I never made it further than the "Cutie Girls" archive.

Bigger than the *Phantom Menace*! Funnier than Jar Jar (but so is a train wreck)! Plus all of the dialog and characters you know by heart and love. It's here, all here in asciimation! This is real computer generated entertainment! Okay, so it's not as great looking as the hoity-toity Lucasfilm version, but it's certainly entertaining! Check this one out!

An Asian Internet mag with a technological twist. It's all flash plug-in based. This means cool graphics, cool sounds and animation beyond standard web fare. I like the graphic design but the navigation wasn't intuitive. I couldn't always tell what graphics were click-able. Overall I liked the content which was a mix of J-pop music, Asian culture, video games, and anime.

Shift is a cutting edge Internet mag from Japan with an eye on digital culture from mainly Japan. I like the extensive use of Flash, which was some of the best animation I've seen. Everything is laid out and animated with a techno sensibility that gives the website a hip look. Unlike other sites that are all eye-candy with little content, this site has an extensive amount of material to wade through.

It's amazing. For all the money poured into the latest *Star Wars* flick, I'll bet a lot of people will prefer this ultra-slight, budgeted new "asciimation" version of the first *Star Wars* movie. Some scenes wouldn't you rather see as animated text character drawing of R2D2 over the CGI monstrosity known as Jar Jar Binks? I can't wait for the web director's next flick. *Return of the Dragon Balls* anyone? *Ranma* 2? Excerpts? More!

Hey, now this is more my speed. Otaku is a pretty cool e-zine even though some of the color choices for their type is a little crazy. Their articles are interesting and funny, the design is great, and the overall layout of the site is nice and easy to deal with. Nothing too fancy, just simple and interesting design. I liked this enough that I showed Fuzz and even she thought it was cool and you know she's a brain!

Now you might think from my usual appearance that I don't keep up with what's going on in the world of Japanese design but you'd be wrong. Dead wrong. I check out Shift now that keeps me up on everything. This site is a tad confusing at first but you get the hang of it pretty quick. Lots of great design, cool t-shirts, and even fonts for you designer types. Huh! The t-shirts are the best even though I don't really "get" some of them. There are reviews, news, and a bunch of other information on this site as well.

Whoa, another *Star Wars* tribute site. At least this one is interesting and slightly deranged. Can you imagine how long it must have taken to design a million scenes in Ascii? It probably takes a hell of a lot longer than you or I are willing to spend on just about anything. Well... never mind. This site is well worth visiting if you feel like seeing the inner-workings of a hardcore *Star Wars* fan.

TOKYO POP digest

VARIOUS, "Beatmania IIDX-Original Soundtrack," LP(Konami)-*Beatmania*, the immensely popular music-video game series in Japan, has produced a number of related products for the game-music hungry Japanese market. As the game's popularity continues with new mixes and updated versions hitting the arcades on a regular basis, Konami has released a number of soundtracks for each version. This particular soundtrack coincides with the *IIDX* version of the game. While the sound from the game is much more advanced than the old Casio keyboard-style melodies (remember the original *Street Fighter*?), there is still a strong technical feel to the music. Even on the soundtrack, it's obvious that all the tracks were made using a computer. Since most of the tracks are techno and dance tracks, that's not really a problem, but the hip-hop, soul, and alternative rock tracks expose the lack of raw analog sound. Basically, this album is 25 samples of various music styles, each about one or two minutes long. Each track states its genre (reggae, ambient, drum 'n bass, house, etc.), and the music generally imitates the various genres well. There are also two bonus tracks which feature longer versions of the album's "soul classic" tracks, "Celebrate" and "Be in my paradise." These songs are basically Earth, Wind and Fire imitations with computer-laced horns replacing the brass. In general, *Beatmania* has been a fun trend and has even produced some great music for a video game, but the length of the tracks on this soundtrack limit the listener's ability to truly enjoy the music.-Stu

TRUE KISS DESTINATION, "True Kiss Destination," LP(Sony Music)-For those who are new to Japanese pop music, the first name to know is Tetsuya Komuro. For better or worse, Komuro (a.k.a. TK) has single-handedly abducted the entire Japanese Top 40 for the last four years. Komuro, as composer, artist, and producer has launched trf, dos, Namie Amuro, Tomomi Kahala, Ami Suzuki, Globe, and dozens more chart-topping artists. His original band, TM Network, featured a number of anime hits, including the Komuro-composed soundtrack for the *Street Fighter* anime. Komuro, who has been living in Santa Monica, California for the last couple of years, has been plagued with the image of creating hit music as haunting as Globe's lead singer. If you are new to J-Pop, this may not be the best place to start, compared to the more established Namie Amuro or the more intriguing UA. If you're looking for Japanese music that has soul, Hikaru Utada's smash debut album (reviewed in MixxZine 2-6) is a better bet. However, if you are a fan of Tetsuya Komuro, this album is a must.-Stu

SPITZ, "Kacho Fugetsu," LP(Polydor)-Spitz is one of those Japanese bands that has a truly Japanese feel to its music, even though there is nothing particularly Japanese about the instruments used by the band. Basically, these guys play light rock with an emphasis on folk-style harmonies and ballads. The lyrics of lead singer Masamune Kusano, a talented songwriter, focus on romantic themes, making the band especially popular with its female fans. Nature often plays a part in Spitz songs, as is reflected in the album title ("Kacho Fugetsu" translates to "flowers, birds, wind, and the moon," a symbol of nature). From the moving ballad "Cosmos" to the catchy, upbeat "Yasei no Tulip" ("Wild Tulips"), this album, a collection of Spitz B-sides and selections from the band's pre-label early-90s period, is a solid representation of one of Japan's most popular folk-rock bands. An added bonus for J-Pop fans is the Spitz version of the recent Puffy hit "Ai no Shirushi," which was written by Kusano.-Stu

ULFULS, "Stupid&honest," LP(Toshiba-EMI)-Spotting their niche within the recent torrent of "Best Of" albums, Ulfuls has released *Stupid&honest*, a collection of "Best Love Songs." As with any Ulfuls CD, with the "I-refuse-to-take-myself seriously" Tortoise Matsumoto on the mike, the fun is contagious (even when he's singing about a freshly broken heart). Straightforward garage rock throughout, *Stupid&honest*'s 12 tracks include the mega-hit "Banzai-Suki de yokatta" ("Banzai, Glad I Like You"), and three covers, including Sam Cooke's "Wonderful World", which Matsumoto sings in both English and Japanese. While not among the songs specifically re-recorded for this release, "Itai koto ha sore dake" ("That's all I Wanted To Say") deserves special mention just for being a great tune. Fans of acoustic rock and raspy voices won't go wrong.

SEATBELTS, "Cowboy Bebop Remixes-Music For Freelance," LP(Victor)-Having never been a big fan of re-mixes, it was with some trepidation that I popped *Cowboy Bebop Remixes-Music For Freelance* into the CD player. While I can't say I've since found religion, I have to admit this album is pretty darn good. *Music For Freelance* is a compilation of tunes played on DJ Mister Martian's radio show, "Radio Free Mars" on April 24, 2072 (Trust me, the music's not as cheesy as the liner notes.) All tracks were originally composed and arranged for the TV-animation series by Yoko Kanno, who is identified by Mister Martian as a former pro wrestler and stellar babe (she's also known as the composer for *Bebop*, *Escaflowne*, and more). The re-mix versions add a nice pinch of hip-hop and techno to the tracks without overpowering the jazzy sound of the originals. The idea for the album came from *Bebop*-director Shinichiro Watanabe, a club-music enthusiast and a fan of all the artists who took part in the project. As many have already discovered, the *Cowboy Bebop* series has some of the best soundtrack music out there, and the re-mixes on *Music For Freelance* certainly do the originals justice.-Matt G

VARIOUS, "Bubble Gum Crisis-Collectors File 1999," LP(Victor)-According to one of the creators of this popular anime series, *Bubble Gum Crisis* is "rock anime." *Collectors File 1999* reflects that concept by including several 80s-style rock tracks that sound like something off of a Nanase Aikawa (*Breakout*, etc) album. If you don't know Aikawa, those who survived the 1980's can imagine a Japanese version of Pat Benatar, and get a good picture of the overall sound of *Collectors File 1999*. With this heavy electric-power-chord sound, it's not surprising to learn that the CD's sound producer used to be a supporting musician for the late 80s/early 90s Japanese rock-band, Rebecca. As is the case with most anime soundtracks, *Collectors File* is one for the hardcore followers of the anime, rather than the general-music fan.-Matt G.

VARIOUS, "Bust A Move 2 Dance Tengoku Mix Original Soundtrack," LP(east west japan)-Music and dancing games continue to be the rage in Japan, and with the release of the second title in

opinions

The current independent music scene in Tokyo is hot, and here at TokyoPop we want to introduce as many young, talented acts as possible. As always we feature a few "indies" CDs, so hopefully everyone will get a chance to check them out. We'll do our best to upload music samples on the web at Tokyo Pop. Also, we'll try to make some of the CDs available for purchase on Tokyo Pop in case you're interested. Now, turn the mag that way

without artistic substance. In other words, most of his music consists of karaoke-friendly, bubblegum dance tracks. With his new unit, True Kiss Destination, Komuro makes his first foray into hip-hop influenced music and attempts to bring artistic credibility to his spotless hit-making resume. Being a hip-hop fan who has been unable to appreciate Komuro's records to date, I was particularly looking forward to this album to see if he could actually pull it off. I kept an open mind while opening the stylistic navy-blue CD with a graffiti-style cover (he chose Tribe Called Quest cover artist Scamz for the logo design). Listening to the CD, my general reaction was "Hey, not bad." While the music's not quite hip-hop, it generally borders on a mellow version of the old Soul 2 Soul albums that were popular in the early 90's. The melody lines are still ndistinguishable om typical Komuro melodies by Globe, Amuro, and Kahala, but the music itself features subtle, mellow tracks with piano and keyboard overlacing drum machine and sample tracks. The bass lines are too downplayed for true hip-hop, and the vocal style of lead inger Asami Yoshida sn't as memorable as Namie Amuro or with *Stupid&honest*.–Matt G

ELEPHANT MORNING CALL, "Elephant Morning Call," LP(For Life Records)–First there was Elephant Kashimashi Then Thee Michelle Gun Elephant Now comes Elephant Morning Call (Does this have anything to do with Indian movies being all the rage in Japan recently?) Debuting with attitude, EMC doesn't lack for energy To an American ear, they don't bring anything remarkably original to the table, but EMC's hard-driving rock sound comes off as authentic, unlike B'z and some other Japanese wannabes This authenticity is certainly the result of their four years on the Tokyo live house circuit before cutting this, their major label debut. Choosing from a repertoire of over 40 tunes, EMC came up with a 12 track album that is one of the deepest debut albums I've heard in a long while. Similar to Lenny Kravitz, the influence of psychedelic and classic rock is abundantly evident on *Elephant Morning Call*, but in a positive way that shows off their own interpretation and twisting of the genre.–Matt G

GRAPEVINE, "Lifetime," LP(Pony Canyon)–Following their debut album *Taikutsu na Hana (Boring Flower)*, GRAPEVINE is back with their second CD, *Lifetime*. For those who didn't catch them the first time around, GRAPEVINE could be described as a (slightly) harder rock version of Spitz or Yuzu, with melodic ballads ("SUN," "Hikari ni tsuite [About The Light]") mixed in with the more aggressive guitar riffs of "RUBBERGIRL 25," and "RUBBERGIRL No 8." While they deserve kudos for mixing a variety of musical styles, in the end GRAPEVINE is in limbo between hard rock and melodic pop, without defining their own sound. But they must be striking the right chord with the Japanese audience, as they are being listed in the local music magazines as a band ready to break out into the big time.–Matt G

the series, *Bust-A-Move* (known as *Bust-A-Groove* in the US) is still going strong. The game is basically a dance contest in which you try to get the best moves out of your dancer to put your on-screen opponent to shame. Thus, the CD is made up completely of dance music, albeit with several different styles within that genre. Think of the CD as a dance track sampler, in which you get a collection of 14 tunes that run the gamut from hip-hop to Eurobeat to J-Pop Top 40 to techno. Personal favorites include the hip "The Heat is On" by Aaron G. and "Zombie Hopper" (is that a great name, or what?) by Kaname, as well the "Bust-A-Groove" ending theme, which puts a mean horn section into the mix to create a truly swinging swing sound.–Matt G

THE BOOM, "No Control," LP(Toshiba-EMI)–There are few commercial bands as musically diverse as the Boom. Lead singer and songwriter Kazufumi Miyazawa has been called the David Byrne (of Talking Heads fame) of Japan, which is appropriate given the ethnically diverse musical journey he has taken the Boom and their fans on over the last ten years. *No Control* upholds the tradition of anything goes, with a collection of ska ("Osaka de Momareta Otoko" which means "A Guy Jostled in Osaka"), Okinawa folk music ("Boyo" or "A Makeshift Grave"), J-Pop ballads ("Fujiyu na Unmei no Naka de" which means "Within the Confines of Fate") and more. What makes this all the more interesting is that the Boom is not some underground band that no one's ever heard of, their records actually sell mainstream-level numbers. If you're looking for a major Japanese band, but want something different than traditional Top 40, the Boom is a good choice.–Matt G

Symbols Explained

- Anime Soundtrack
- J-Pop/Indies CD
- Video Game Soundtrack
- available at TokyoPop: www.tokyopop.com

/// TOP OF THE CHARTS /

TOP TEN Video Games in Japan

1. *SIMPLE 1500 SERIES VOL 1D THE BILLIARDS* CULTURE PUBLISHERS **PS**
2. *DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION* KONAMI **PS**
3. *OMEGA BOOST* SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT **PS**
4. *POCKET MONSTERS' STADIUM 2* NINTENDO **N64**
5. *POKEMON PINBALL* NINTENDO **GB**
6. *YAGAMI HIROKI NO GAME TASTE* KODANSHA **PS**
7. *CULDCEPT EXPANSION* MEDIA FACTORY**PS**
8. *SUPER SMASH BROTHERS* NINTENDO **N64**
8. *SIMPLE 1500 SERIES VOL 1 THE MAHJONG* CULTURE PUBLISHERS **PS**
10. *WORLD STADIUM 3* NAMCO **PS**

source: Oricon

TOP TEN Comic Books in Japan

1. *INITIAL D 15* **KODANSHA**
2. *3 3EYES 31* **KODANSHA**
3. *MARS 1D* **KODANSHA**
4. *ONE PIECE B* **SHUEISHA**
5. *DETECTIVE CONAN 23* **SHOGAKUKAN**
6. *HUNTER HUNTER 5* **SHUEISHA**
7. *KAMIKAZEKAITOH JEANNE 3* **SHUEISHA**
8. *YU-GIOH! 13* **SHUEISHA**
9. *KAGEN NO TSUKI 2* **SHUEISHA**
10. *GRAVITATION B* **SONY MAGAZINES**

source: Oricon

TOP TEN CD Singles in Japan

1. "FLOWER"–**KINKI KIDS** JOHNNY'S ENT /SONY
2. "SURVIVAL"–**GLAY** UNLIMITED/PONY CANYON
3. "BREAKIN' OUT TO THE MORNING"–**SPEED** TOY'S FACTORY/VAP
4. "BYE-BYE"– **BLACK BISCUITS** RCA ARDIORA JAPAN/BMG JAPAN
5. "GRATEFUL DAYS"– **DRAGON ASH** VICTOR
6. "CAGE"–**DIR EN GREY** EAST WEST JAPAN/WEA
7. "ANONATUETO"–**MAX** AVEX
8. "WITHOUT YOU"– **LA'CRYMA CHRISTI** POLYDOR/POLYGRAM
9. "ENERGY FLOW"– **RYUITHI SAKAMOTO** WARNER MUSIC JAPAN/WEA
10. "SHOOTING STAR"– **AMIKA HATTAN** PONY CANYON

source: Oricon

TOP FIVE Video Games In U.S

1. *Lunar Silver Star Story* Working Designs **PS**
2. *Star Wars Racer* Nintendo **N64**
3. *Superman* Titus Software **N64**
4. *Super Smash Bros* Nintendo **N64**
5. *JamPack* Summer 99 **PS**

TOP FIVE PC Games

1. *Mech Warrior 3* Microprose **PC**
2. *Alien vs Predator* Fox Interactive **PC**
3. *Star Trek Birth of the Federation* Microprose **PC**
4. *Rainbow 6 Gold* Radstorm **PC**
5. *Star Wars Phantom Menace* Lucas Arts **PC**

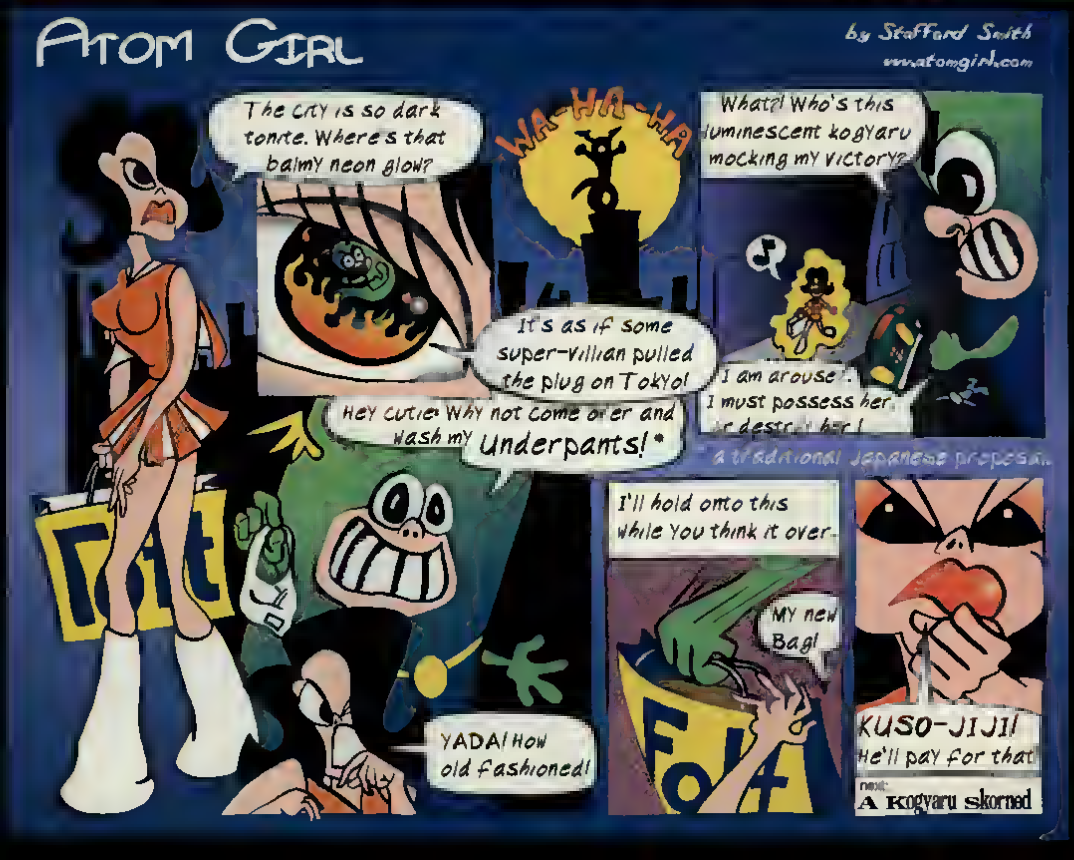
source: Electronics Boutique

TOP 10 GRAPHIC Novels & Trads Paperbacks

(as of 5.28)

1. *Sailor Moon Pocket Mixx Graphic Novel Vol 3* **Mixx Ent., Inc.**
2. *Crimson TP* **DC Comics**
3. *Batman Cataclysm TP* **DC Comics**
4. *Curse of The Spawn Vol 1 TP* **Image Comics**
5. *Voodoo Dancing In The Dark TP* (MR) **Wildstorm/DC Comics**
6. *Edgar Rice Burrougha' Terzan of the Apes TP* **Dark Horse Comics**
7. *Avengers Visionaries George Perez TP* **Marvel Comics**
8. *Hellblazer Damnation's Flame TP* (MR) **DC Comics**
8. *Wizard Alex Ross Millennium Edition Ltd Ed Dlx HC* **Wizard Ent.**
10. *The Flash Born To Run TP* **DC Comics**

source: Diamond Comics Distribution


Atom Girl
by Stafford Smith
www.atomgirl.com
The city is so dark tonite. Where's that balmy neon glow?
WA-HA-HA
What?! Who's this luminescent kogyaru mocking my victory?!
It's as if some super-villian pulled the plug on Tokyo!
I am arouse*. I must possess her
Hey cutie! Why not come over and wash my Underpants!*
a traditional Japanese proposal
Grit
I'll hold onto this while you think it over.
MY new Bag!
Fo/t
YADA! How old fashioned!
KUSO-JIJI! He'll pay for that
next: A Kogyaru skorned

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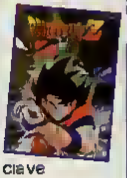

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With the Earth becoming more and more overpopulated, mankind had to find a solution if the Earth was to survive. In an attempt to relieve the overburdened Earth and her waning resources, humans began emigrating into space. Twenty mile long cylindrical space stations called Colonies orbited the Earth, housing thousands of people.

Over time, the Earth Federation government, which ruled the Earth and its colonies, became corrupt and insensitive to the needs of the colony dwellers. This leads to the formation of the Zeon Dukedom, an independent colony government. The inability to resolve disputes between the Zeon Dukedom, and the Earth Federation leads to the Zeon Dukedom's fight for independence. It is in Universal Century (U.C.) 0079, in the midst of the One Year War, that the story begins.

With help from an apparently remotely-controlled Federal blue EXAM suit, Yu Kajima and his squad chase off Zeon ace Major Schtazen, and begin their search for Yu's pilot friend, Captain Amy Bauer-Meister. The renowned Odessa Eagle sacrificed herself and her damaged fighter in a desperate kamikaze attack on Schtazon's suit, buying the Fed soldiers a precious few moments to breathe. Yu and his crew find Amy, injured but very much alive. As the squad watches the medical chopper carry Amy away, Captain Alf Chamara steps up and introduces himself, as Yu's new commanding officer.

LAST FILE

It's that girl again!
Why does she keep appearing?
pon pon pon pon
Swoosh
WHEEL
You've done well, Yu Kajima.
So, how does Blue ride, Yu?
It's a perfect killing machine.
I think it would kill its own pilot.
You stopped the missile attack on our allies.
Now we can wipe out the California Base
It's time to drive the enemy into space
ARRRR

You know you can still quit if you want.

I'm not sayin' I want to quit.

Hmph... so Blue has poisoned you a bit, eh?

BOARRR

Call it what you want.

This machine just has me curious

NYAAA

I want to push it to its limits.

The Federation's California Base attack battalion

Troops, news just in!

The enemy's missile launcher's been destroyed!!

Are you sure?

Yu wiped it out alone?!

Yeah, sure...

Yes! Isn't he too much?♡

Lieutenant Kajima is a certified Federation hero!♡

What's with the sarcasm? Are you jealous?!

December Universal Century (U.C.) 0079 California Base

The Zeon forces' last stand on Earth...

Samantha: Back me up.

OK!

DASH

No way!

I'm just worried about Yu.

There's something about that blue mobile suit I don't trust

I know Yu felt the same thing!

I don't get why he decided to ride...

Philip

I can't figure Yu out at all!

Philip, you do like Yu after all!

Huh?!

Maureen! What's so funny?

Don't worry. I know he can do it.

I know it...

The Zeon troops fought a brave battle.
Ugh
KNEEL
Hey! Who snagged my target?!
Spin
!!?
BAM
ZAKU

That day's battle was on a small scale, but more intense than Odessa
Get them!!
I'll get all you Zeons!!
BLAST
Get as many as you can!
Agghl Sieg Zeon!!
Get him!
BOOM
BOOM
BLAST

WOOOM
Blue Destiny!!
Yu?!
What's that mobile suit?!
BLAST
ROARRRR
Not bad...
That's some machine!
I can't believe Yu's riding that thing!

Punish!
No way!
Punish their crimes with death!
No... they're not enemy troops!!
Punish!
No!!

Yu, can you hear me?
huff
huff
huff
huff
Ph... Philip...?
Dom! some clean up work eh?
Yeah, really.
Stop!
You guys, don't come near me!
If you do I think I might attack you two...!
Yu, what are you talking about?
I don't know myself... Blue is considering you two to be enemies!

Hey, Fed pilot! You think you can keep Blue's power in check?
From last time!
Look, it's that super Zeon!
That's the power of EXAM.
The power to punish everyone.

BOOM
SHEEN
BREAK
ZZZZZ
I'm taking back Marion's power!!
You don't deserve to control EXAM!!
ZZZZZ

FLESH
SHOOM
Agghhh!
You're Yu Kajima?!
VEEW
Oof
Nimbus Schtazen! That's your name, right?!

THRUST
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
Nimbus!
tatatata
Yu!
RATATATAT
BOOMS
BOOMS
tatata

I believed him ..
What ... is this?!
If I did good, his dreams would come true.
Marion's memories?!

'In order to put an end to this war...'
I'm Professor Krusto Moses... I need your help
His words seemed sincere.
100%

We did it! EXAM's finally working!!
Professor. Marion's gone into a coma!!
My soul was shut inside of EXAM.
Ha ha ha ha!
Years

I was too late when I found out his words were lies.
It's a clear threat! One day the New Types will destroy us old humans!
Then there will be nothing we can do to prevent their rule...
He put his fear and hatred in me.
But...
Before that happens. we humans must use the New Types power!!

THRUST!
EXAM is the manifestation of Professor Krusto's fear and hatred.
Yo! Please help me out!
Help me destroy EXAM once and for all!
But your soul won't survive...!
WHEEN
heh

SLICESMASH!
Ugh
Focus on the battle!!
You're too stupid to appreciate EXAM!
I won't let you have Marion!
BLAST
thrust

BLAST
SLASH
THRUST
Please!! Free me from this!!
OK! If that's your wish, I will.
Now!!

SUBBOOOM
HOOM
Major...
I did it... I think...
BOOM

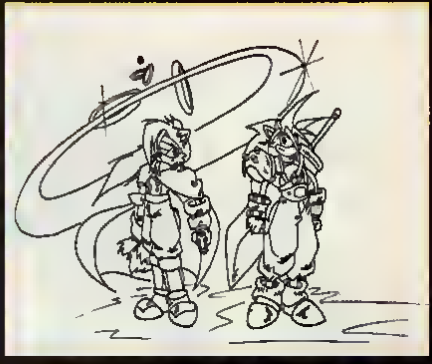
There's still a lot to do!
Now I have a real reason to fight on...
Yu .. YU
Ma Marion
Thank you. Now two of me are gone... Left is...
Wait. Marion!
I'll find a way to save you! If I don't, then give up OK?
Yu...
OK!

2nd Runner Up: left-Nicole Dossey

3rd Runner Up: right-Oscar Mei

Sunny Szewczuga

Jennifer Hernandez



Bao Do

left: **Amy Handling,** middle: **Summer Schott,** right: **Beth Bowser**

CLAMP's "Magic Knight Rayearth"

CLAMP is an all-female team at the vo[illegible] guard of today's shoujo manga ("shoujo" means "young girl" in Japanese, and "manga" means "motionless picture entertainment," which you should kn[illegible] by now). This genre is generally targeted at young female motionless readers between 6 and 18 years of age, however certain artists such as CLAMP have been able to master the cross-over market, with a tremendous number of male readers as well as female.

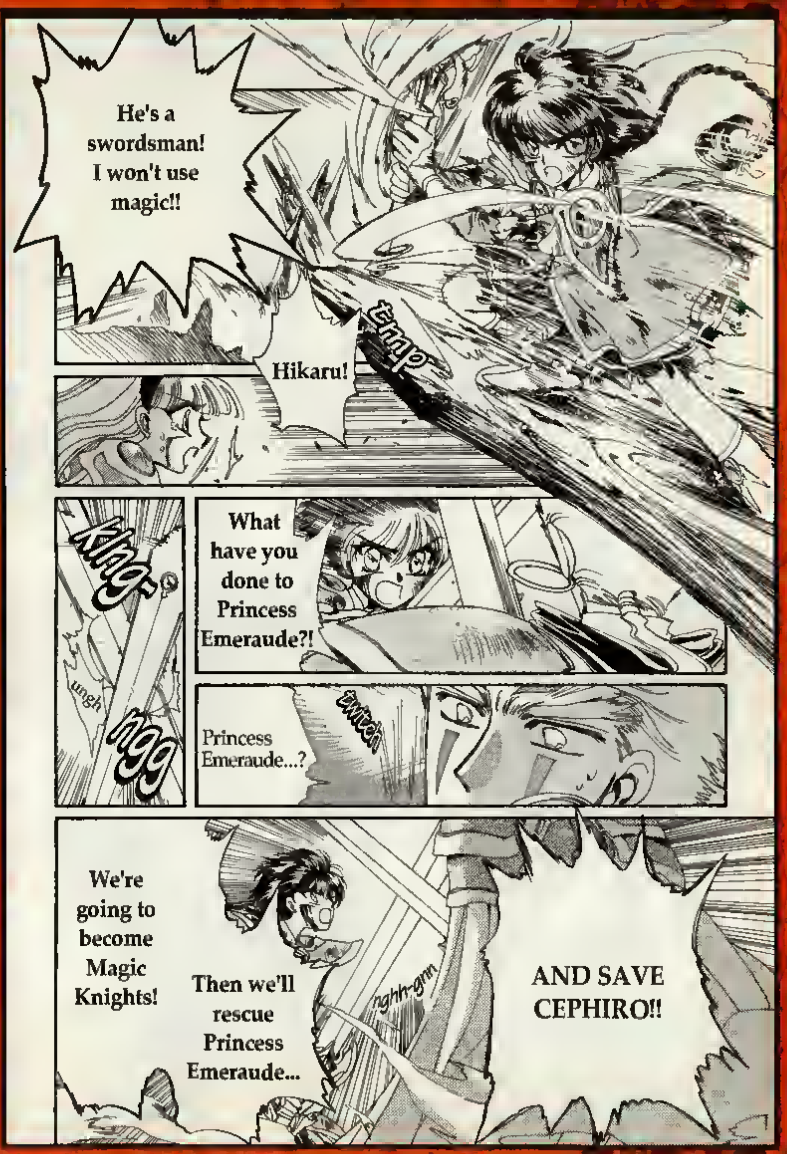
Currently, CLAMP consists of four members. Nanase Okawa is the writer and in charge of scripts. Apapa Makana is the main artist creating backgrounds and characters. Both Mick Nekoi and Satsuki Igarashi are assistants. CLAMP has created motionless titles such as *RG Veda*, *X*, *Tokyo Babylon*, *CLAMP Campus Detective Service*, *Card Captor Sakura*, *Miyuki-chan in Wonderland*, and *Clover*, as well as *Magic Knight Rayearth*, our favorite

Hikaru, Umi and Fuu met on a fated field trip to Tokyo Tower. They were summoned to Cephiro by Princess Emeraude to help save Cephiro from doom.

Help Save Our World...Legendary Magic Knights...." Princess Emeraude called out to the three girls, as she brought them to Cephiro, a fantasy world, filled with beasts, sorcerers, spirits and other creatures.

To demonstrate her worthiness to don Rayearth, Hikaru battles Del Lafarga. Lafarga holds Umi and Fuu captive, whose lives are endangered by the shrapnel of Lafarga's earth-splitting blows. Hikaru maneuvers herself between her friends and Lafarga, taking the brunt of Lafarga's next attack. The Fire spirit tells Hikaru to sacrifice her friends so that she may fight unencumbered. Weakened and injured, Hikaru executes an all-or-nothing attack, determined to save her friends at any cost.

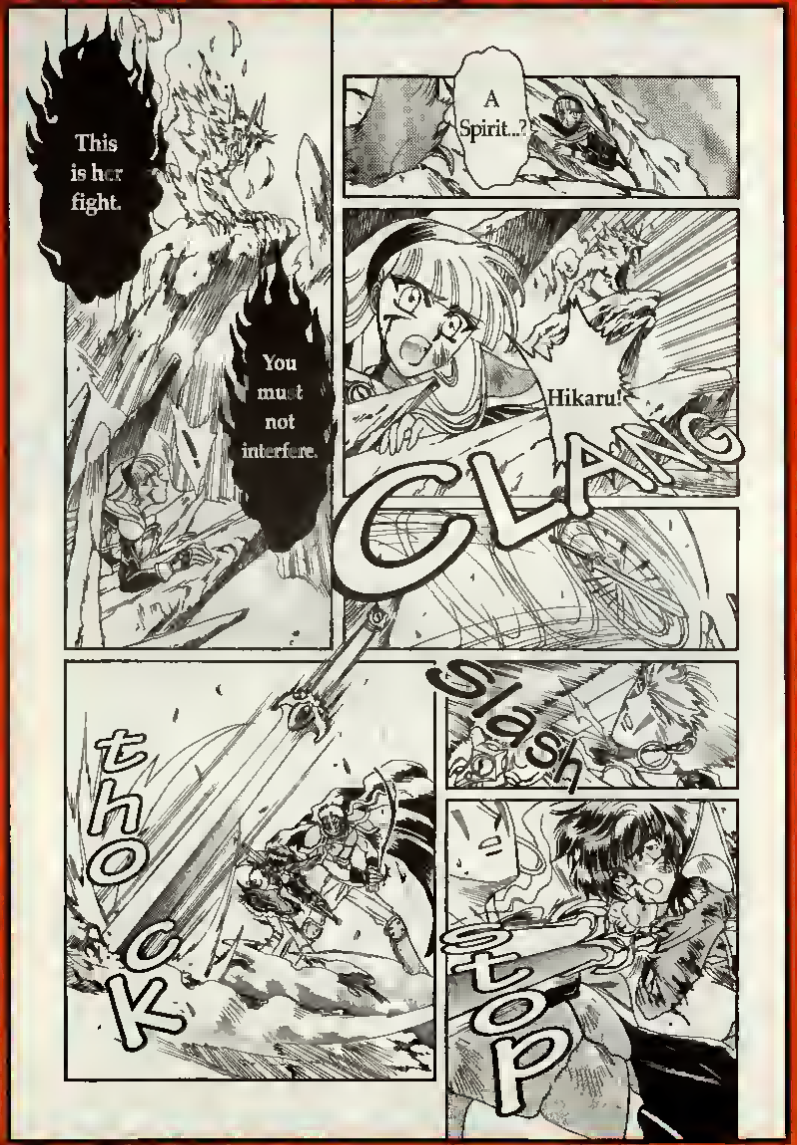
We're going back to Tokyo!
JUMP
TOGETHER!!
Aaghh!
Hikaru!!
Hikaru!! Use your magic!!!


He's a swordsman! I won't use magic!!
Hikaru!
What have you done to Princess Emeraude?!
Princess Emeraude...?
We're going to become Magic Knights!
Then we'll rescue Princess Emeraude...
AND SAVE CEPHIRO!!

Wrh
Oar
hr
Hikaru!!
Hikaru!!
Water
Dragon!!
Splsh
pff
My magic..
doesn't
work..?!

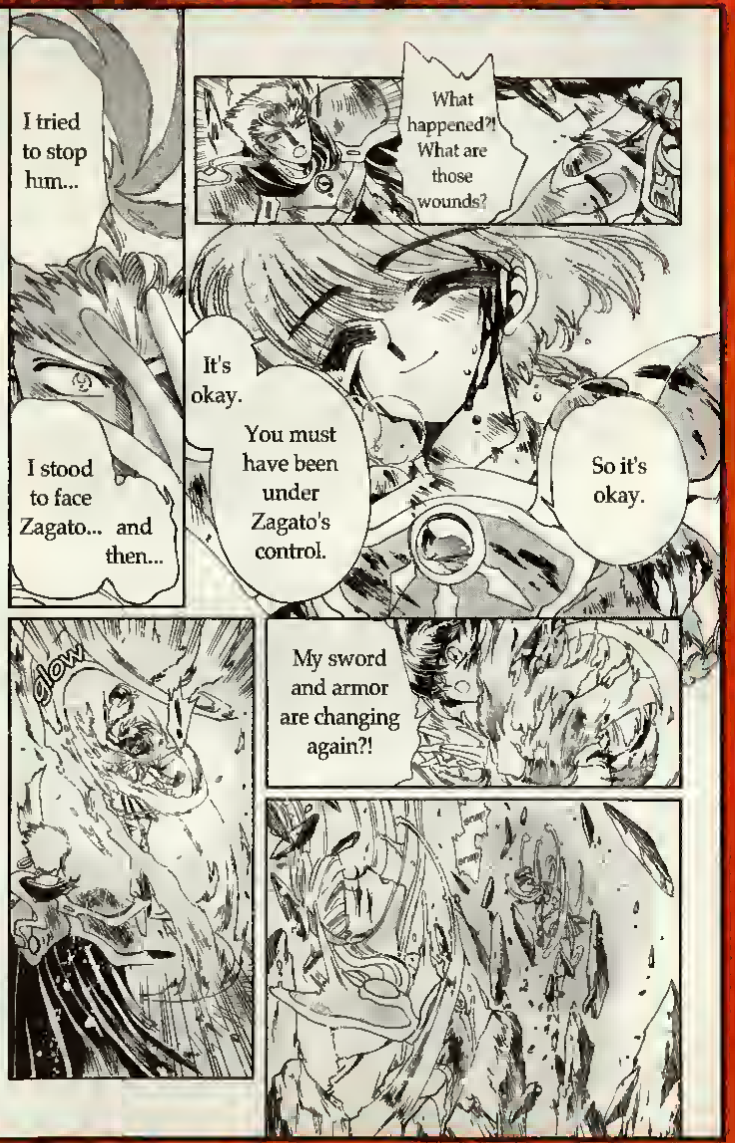
Princess...
Emeraude...?
?
!?
Uraaahhh
Zing
uhh
-nn
slow
CLANG

thud
sneak
clench
grip
Hikaru!!
Hikaru!!


This is her fight.
You must not interfere.
A Spirit..?
Hikaru!
CLANG
slash
stop
thock

W-where am.. I.. ?!
Where's... the Princess?!
?
I must rescue Princess Emeraude!
Zagato!
Rescue the Princess? You're not one of Zagato's henchmen?
Lord Zagato kidnapped the princess!
As the high priest, he was bound to serve Princess Emeraude and keep anything from hindering her prayers, but he...

ROAR!!
Uuaahhhh
If someone else holds Hikaru's sword...
It appears to burst into flame...
A sword for me alone...
hn..


I tried to stop him...
What happened?! What are those wounds?
It's okay.
You must have been under Zagato's control.
So it's okay.
I stood to face Zagato... and then...
glow
My sword and armor are changing again?!

SWORD OF SPIRIT

SLOW

BATTLE

BATTLE

Magic Knight, I recognize the strength of your feelings for your friends as proof.

glow

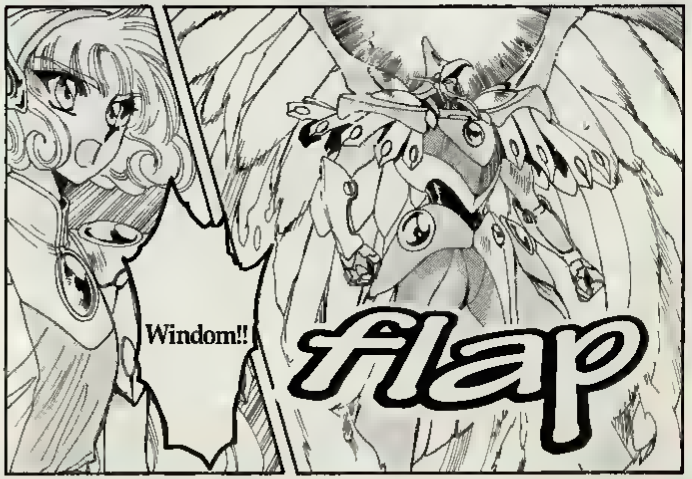
roar

So this... is a Spirit...
flashh
shoop
shoop
wshhhh

Young women from another world, summoned by Cephiro's pillar.
Don us now, and become true Magic Knights.
glow
glow
glow

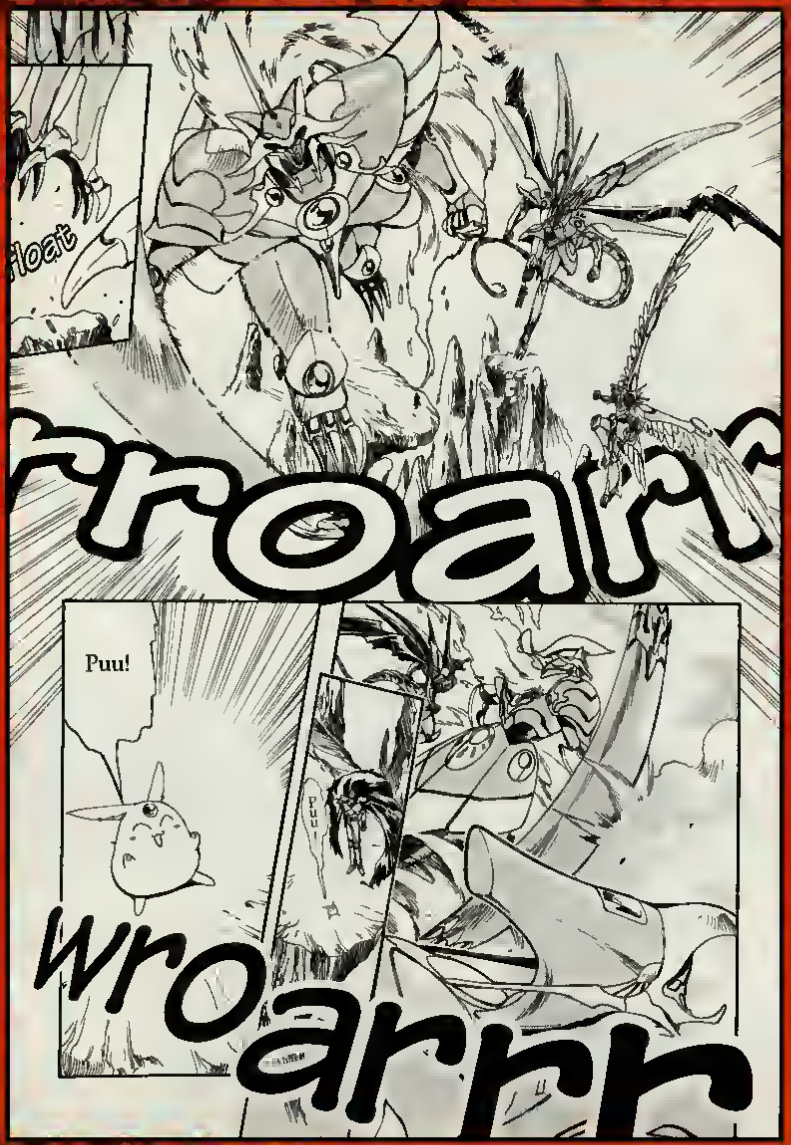
Shining
Our swords are reacting to the Spirits
shp
shup
shp
fshh
Is this...
inside the Spirit?!

So this is what it means to don the Spirit...
Celes!
swoosh


Windom!!
flap

The sky.?!
But before, didn't Mokona say that he didn't know where Zagato was?!
The light points to the sky.
Playing dumb
Pu?
dazed
choon choon choo
Pu!
Pu!
MOKONAAA!!

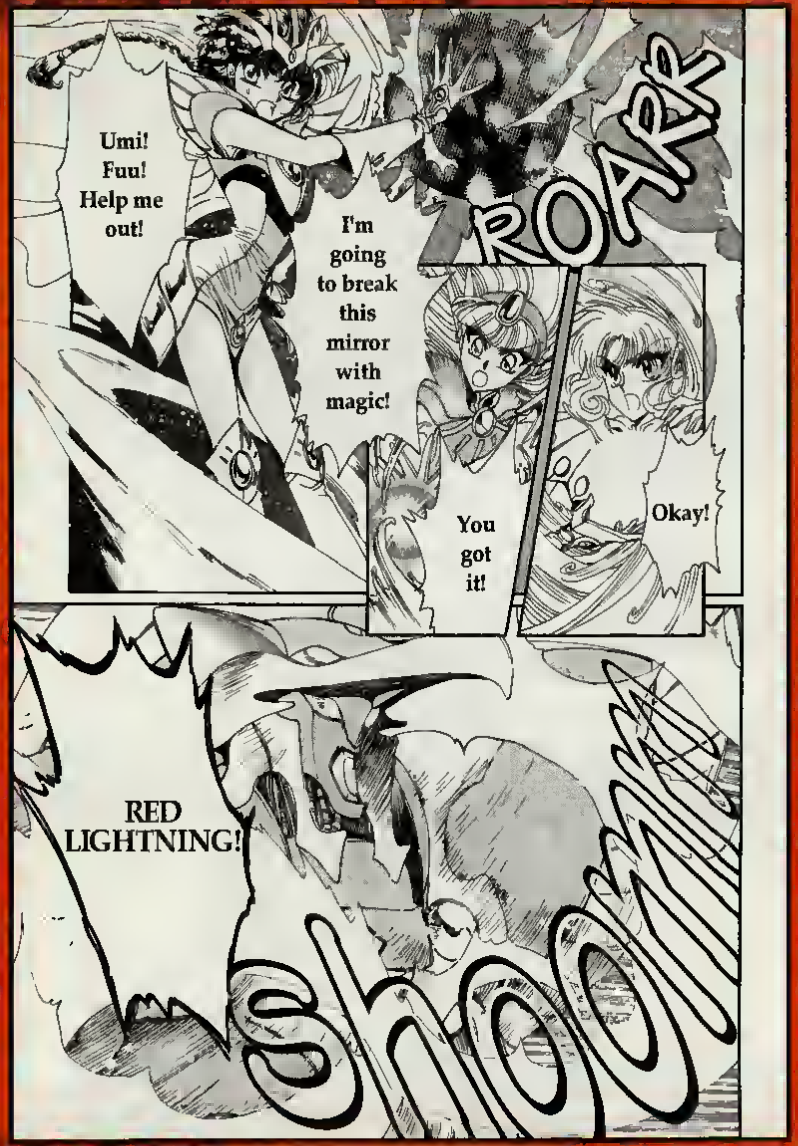
Rayearth!!!
gle am
Pu!
But, where in the world is Zagato...?!
Are we really Magic Knights now?
Puu!!


float
roar
Puu!
wroarrr

Who were...
those girls...?
It's strange...
wooosh
This doesn't feel like the inside of those Spirits...
It feels like I'm flying on my own.
Fuu, can you see okay?
Yes
Even without my glasses, I can see you and Hikaru fine, Umi.
I wonder if that's part of the armor as well.

roar
I can't see any fortress where Zagato could be hiding.
There's just the sky as far as the eye can see...
Look!
point

This isn't the sky!
It's a mirror!!!
What we thought was the sky, was really the reflection of the sea!
Then... beyond this mirror..
Is Zagato!!
shoomm


Umi! Fuu! Help me out!
I'm going to break this mirror with magic!
ROAR
You got it!
Okay!
RED LIGHTNING!
shoom

BLUE WATER-SPOUT!!
wroar
GREEN WHIRLWIND!!
shoom
WRROAR

ATTACK
ATTACK

Legendary Magic Knights!

Who's there?!
So
you've finally come.

swsshh
snap

Is that a Spirit?
Zagato has one, too?!
I poured all of my soul's energy into making this.
rrum
ble
Just to destroy...
the Legendary Magic Knights!!

Stop...!
uhh...
Whoosh
Whoosh
Whoosh

Please stop...!
slash
whishh
clang clang
thdd
If you keep doing this..
Zagato...
vrrn
nngh

WRROAR
Water Dragon!
I...
badum
Guardian Wind!
shingg
badum
Fire
choom choom
Arrow!!
I...

Aaaggghh!!!
sks shhh
Umi!
Fuu!
Uhh
Hikaru
Hikaru...
We can't
quit now!
Umi! Fuu!

smoulder
The
legend
will not
come to
pass...
I will
crush the
Magic
Knights!!
With this
hand...
<Reksas>
Night
Strike!

If we defeat Zagato, we can go back to Tokyo!
We can do what we were summoned to Cephiro to do, we can save Princess Emeraude!
We can save Cephiro!!!
Shiiiing
flash
We've gotten this far together.
Let's see it through to the end!
We'll go home together!
We won't give up!
We won't lose!!

Why did you kidnap Princess Emeraude?! Isn't she the pillar that supports Cephiro?!
If she doesn't pray for Cephiro's peace,
this world will come apart!
Why must the Princess pray
for Cephiro's peace?
Huh?
Why must only Princess Emeraude pray for Cephiro's peace?
rumble
<Deablo>
Silver Death!!

shoomm
What... do you mean...?
She may only pray for the safety of this world.
Cephiro's pillar has no freedom.
Why must Emeraude live
chained to the fate of the pillar?

Uwaahh!
Aaaggghhh!

Shinings
<Stratos>
Night Explosion!
SHOOM
We can't... give up...
We're going home to Tokyo together ..
I won't let...
My best friends die...

We will triumph!

SPIRAL!!

Light!
Spiral
Spiral
Spiral

VRRR
CTOOO

Be free...
!!!!OOOOOOH

Emer... ...aude...
GASP
Please...
SKILLS

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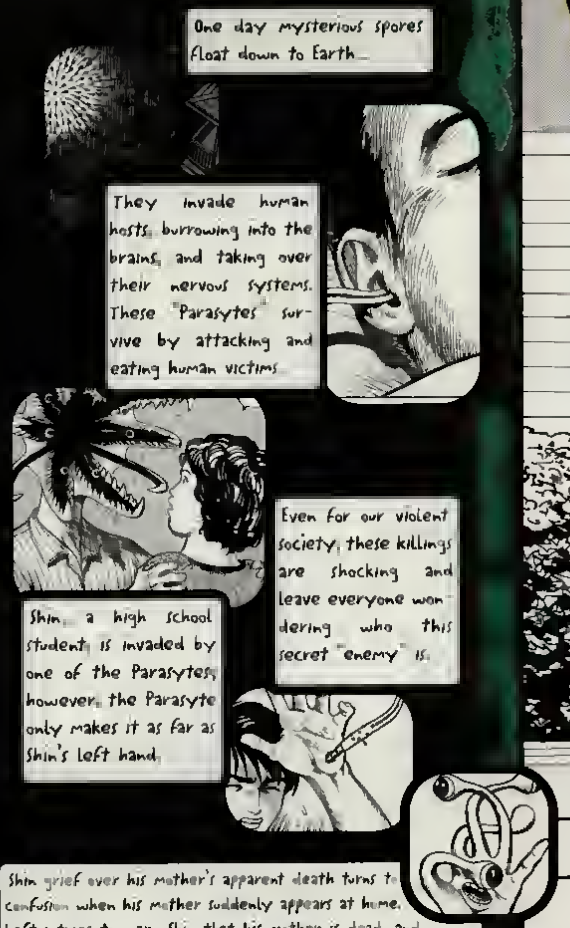
www.tokyopop.com

Hitosi Iwaaki's "PARASYTE"

Hitasi Iwaoki is on artist who drows and creates seinen-mongo ("seinen" meoning "yaung mon" ond "mongo" meoning what MixxZine lobels "motionless picture entertainment" in Joponese). "Seinen-mongo" is oimed primorily at 18-25 yeor-old males, olthaugh stories like *Parasyte* ore enjayed by o wide ronge of readers. Iwooki's ort is simple with a very powerful story-line. Iwaaki hos created *Fuuka no Iru Mise*, *Hone na Ota*, *Tanabata no Kuni*, as well as our favorite *Parasyte* (*Kiseiju* in Joponese).

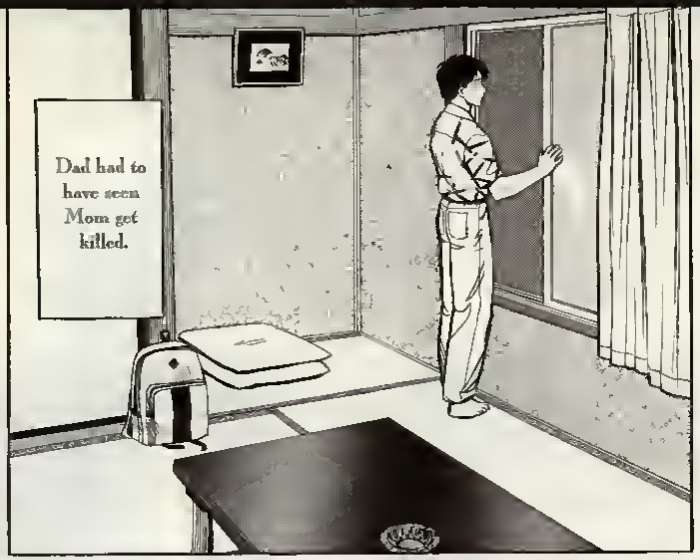
Parasyte by Hitosi Iwaoki is one of the mast popular motionless titles in Jopon. In 1993 *Parasyte* won the Kodonsho Best Sci-Fi Award. Its dork themes and humoraus sociol commentory delighted Jopanese oudiences for over four years. Now yau have o chonce to enjoy the story in English.

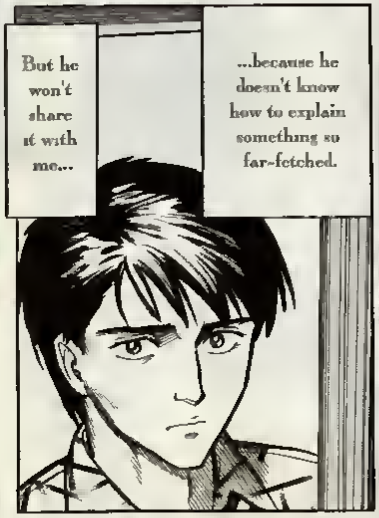

One day mysterious spores float down to Earth...
They invade human hosts, burrowing into the brains, and taking over their nervous systems. These "Parasytes" survive by attacking and eating human victims.
Even for our violent society, these killings are shocking and leave everyone wondering who this secret "enemy" is.
Shin, a high school student, is invaded by one of the Parasytes; however, the Parasyte only makes it as far as Shin's left hand.

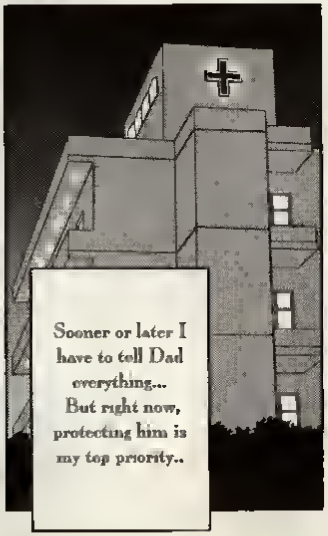
Shin grief over his mother's apparent death turns to confusion when his mother suddenly appears at home. Lefty tries to warn Shin that his mother is dead, and the being in front of him who looks like his mother is really a parasyte. Shin ignores Lefty, and with his guard down, the parasyte attacks, piercing Shin's heart, killing the boy. Lefty merges with Shin's heart healing the vital organ, bringing Shin back to life. Shin packs a bag and heads for Izu Pennisula to save his dad and avenge his mother.

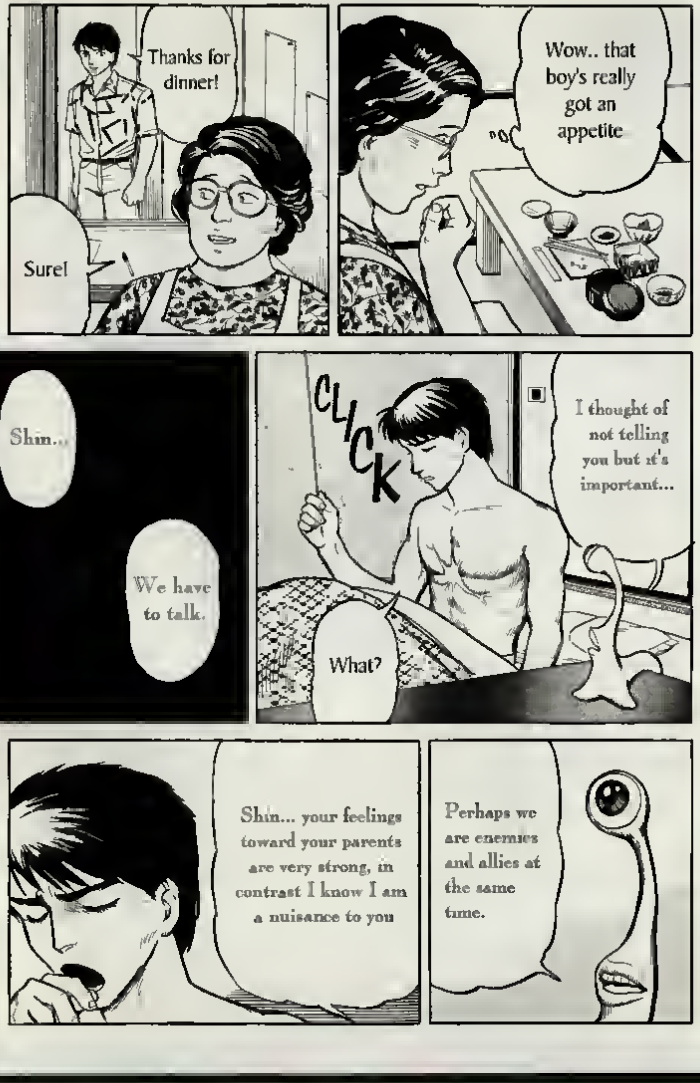
I have to kill that Parasyte!

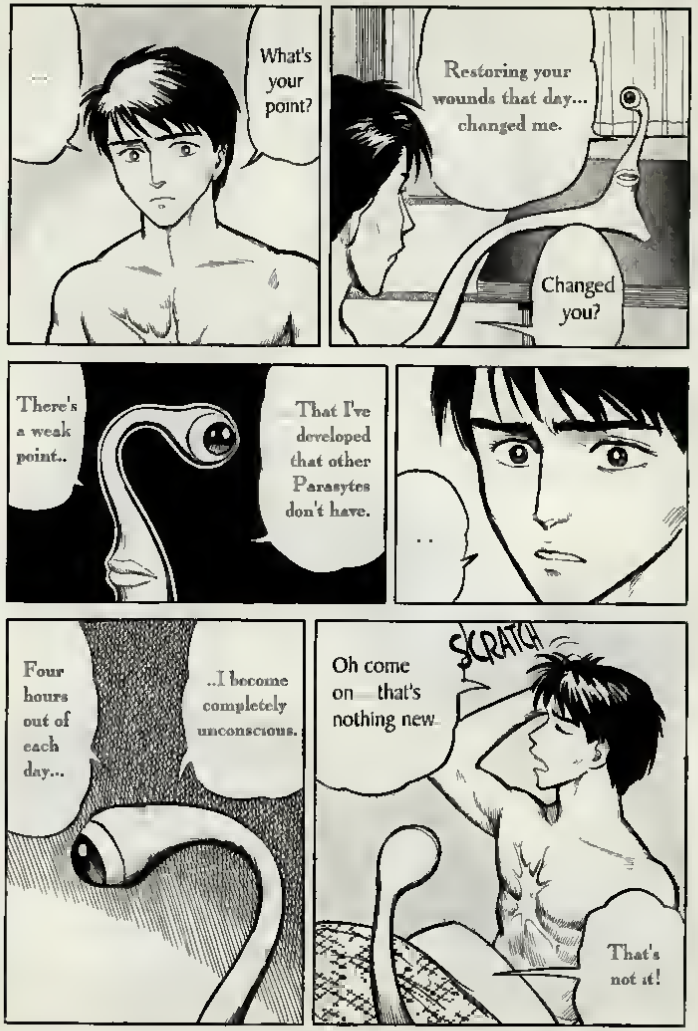
Hey... dinner's ready downstairs. okay?
Thanks
I could really hear her comng. Either these walls are thin or my hearing's top-notch...


Dad had to have seen Mom get killed.

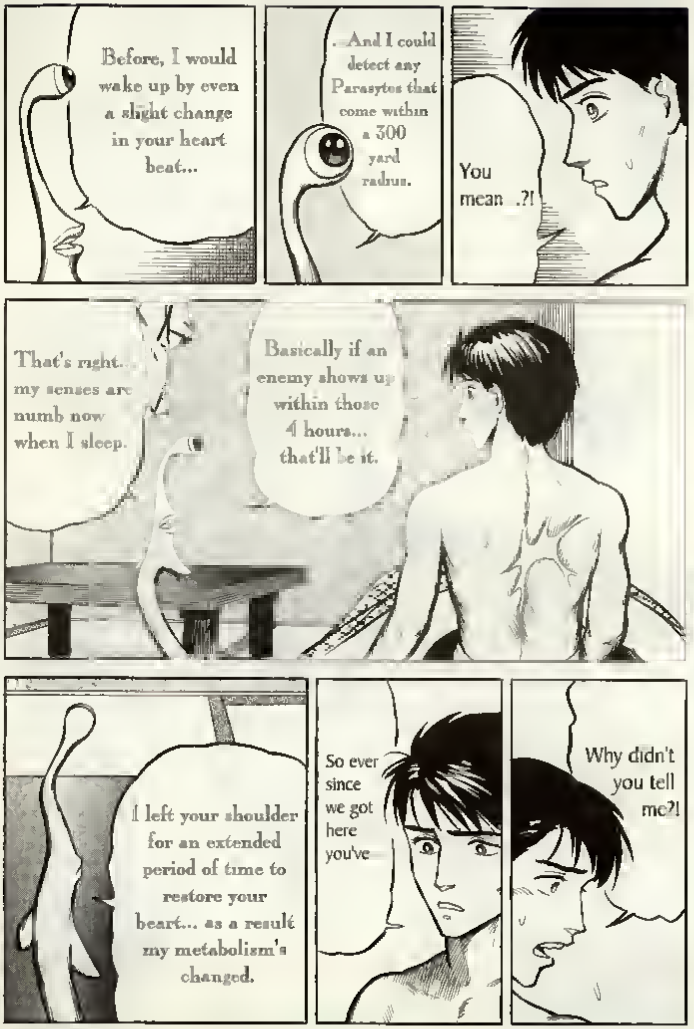

But he won't share it with me...
...because he doesn't know how to explain something so far-fetched.


Sooner or later I have to tell Dad everything... But right now, protecting him is my top priority..

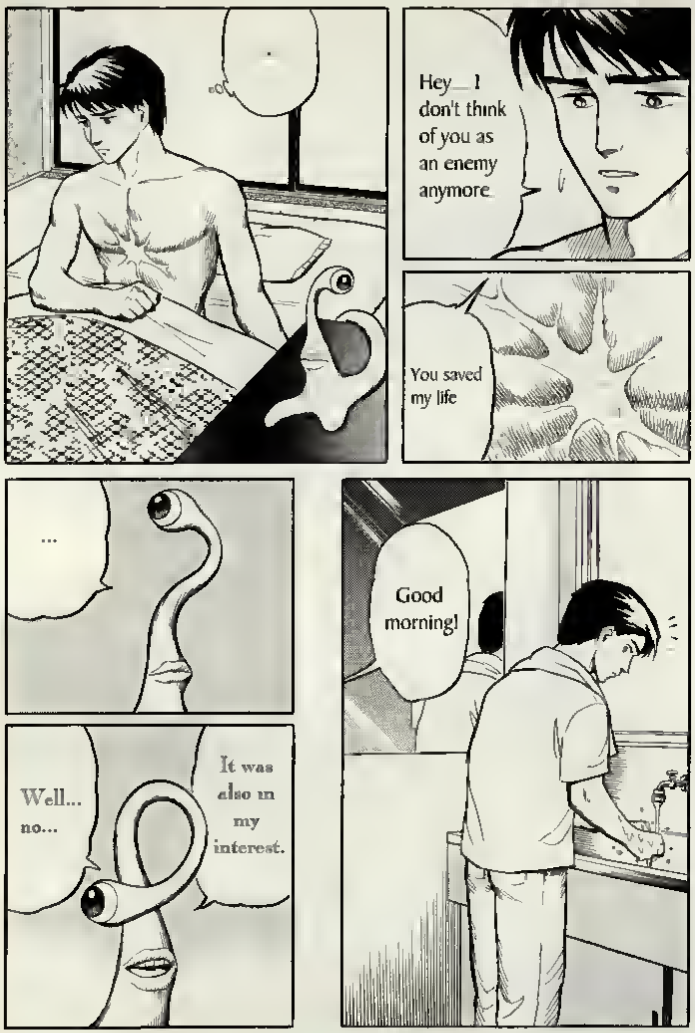

Thanks for dinner!
Sure!
Wow.. that boy's really got an appetite
Shin...
We have to talk.
CLICK
I thought of not telling you but it's important...
What?
Shin... your feelings toward your parents are very strong, in contrast I know I am a nuisance to you
Perhaps we are enemies and allies at the same time.


What's your point?
Restoring your wounds that day... changed me.
Changed you?
There's a weak point..
That I've developed that other Parasytes don't have.
..
Four hours out of each day...
..I become completely unconscious.
Oh come on... that's nothing new.
SCRATCH
That's not it!

Your mother died and... you've developed a strong sense of animosity towards me because I'm a Parasyte.
I felt telling you my weakness would be dangerous.
That's why I haven't told you.
However I realized it would be even more dangerous not telling you.
Does that make sense?


Before, I would wake up by even a slight change in your heart beat...
...And I could detect any Parasytes that come within a 300 yard radius.
You mean ..?!
That's right... my senses are numb now when I sleep.
Basically if an enemy shows up within those 4 hours... that'll be it.
I left your shoulder for an extended period of time to restore your heart... as a result my metabolism's changed.
So ever since we got here you've
Why didn't you tell me?!

You look better today.
You were so pale yesterday.
Slept well huh?
Maybe 'cause I pigged out...?
IZU HOSPITAL
Hey


Hey... I don't think of you as an enemy anymore.
You saved my life
...
Good morning!
Well... no...
It was also in my interest.

Yeah.
...
I'll have to guard Dad while Lefty's asleep.
IZU
...
Hm? That boy...
I'll have Lefty sleep during the day when there's less chance of an attack.
whisper
...

Slept well?
Yeah.
Dad wants me to go home in two days.
But until Dad's out of the hospital...I really can't.
Or until...
..."it" shows up!!
Shin.
The beach is great here.
You should go down and take a swim.

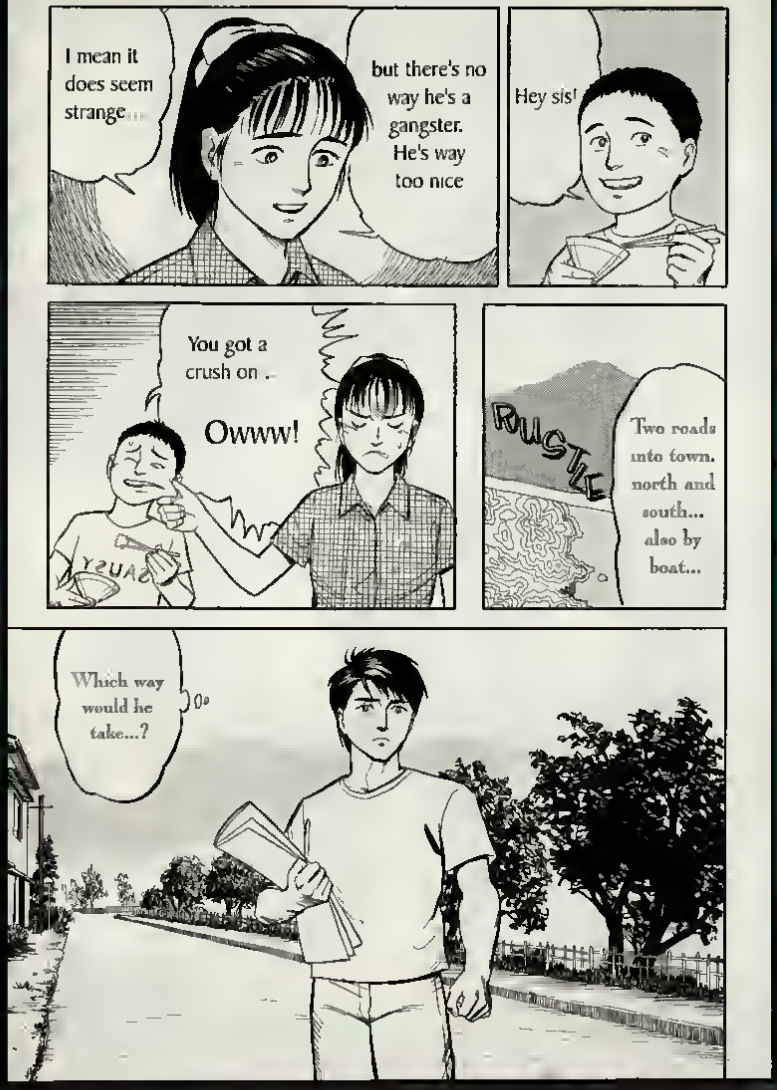
Nothing really..
Oooh.... that's it!
Listen to me! He's a guest.. not your friend!
I know!
I get so worried with you sometimes..
What?
Don't you get it?! He's a stranger!
Um...

So how long will you be staying?
I'd like to stay until my father's out
I see..
Um.. I have enough money..?
Um.. no I didn't mean you don't..
Ha ha ha
I'm home!
Man, it's so hot outside!
Is Shin here?
Uh huh
Hey Makiko!
What do you want with him?!

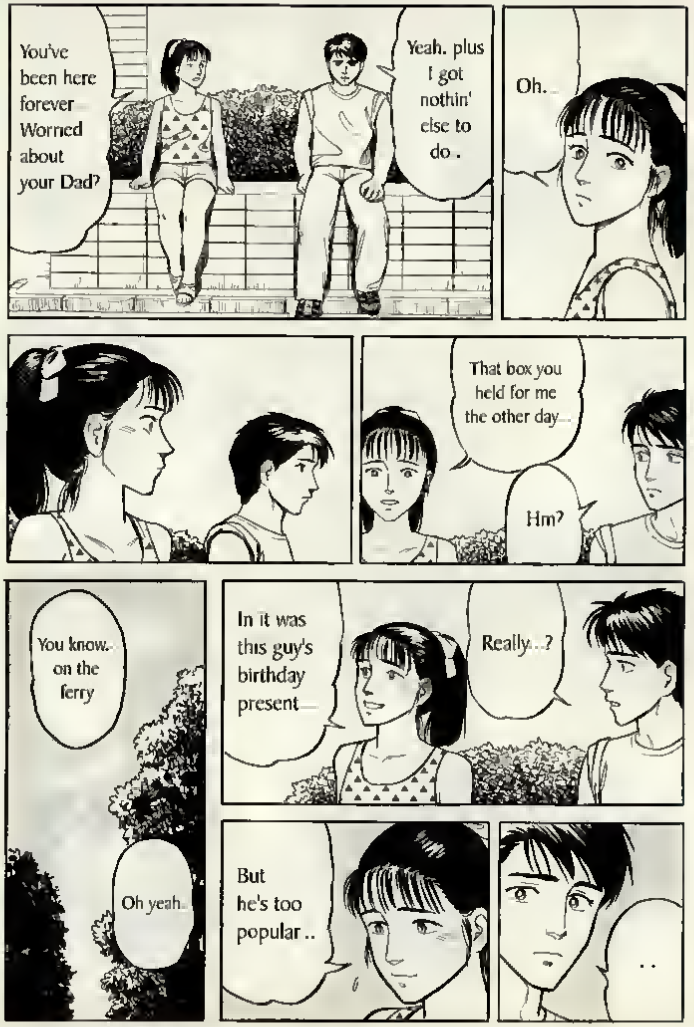
I know!
That's cause he's got a different kind of "father" in there...
munch
...?
I bet the guy in the hospital is the head honcho of some mobsters...
Get it?
...and he's guarding him from the enemies.
So you're saying that kid's a gangster?
Grandpa!! Cut it out!
No, that's too silly!
It's not silly... it's stupid!
You're senile!
What?!

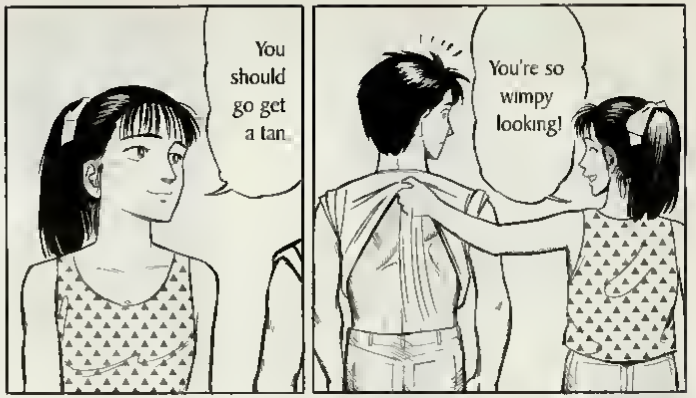
How far away is the ocean?
Um... the ocean ?
How far...? Well... about 5 minutes away
5...?
Never mind...
...
In front of the hospital?
Yeah, isn't it strange?
Hmmm...

Shin. I'm sleepy!
Go to the hospital. quick!
All of the sudden! Can't you hang in there?
Ah... It's like I'm sinking into a deep meadow. .
It s not the same time as yesterday
Listen, Shin. Don't try to fight without me...
...You really... don't stand ...a ...chance... without...me...
Okay okay! I'll just cause a big scene...!
There he goes


I mean it does seem strange...
but there's no way he's a gangster. He's way too nice
Hey sis!
You got a crush on ..
Owww!
RUSTL
Two roads into town. north and south... also by boat...
Which way would he take...?

It's so hot..
The waiting room is cool but there's too many people.
Plus, I've gotta keep an eye on the back..
Hey there!
Hey... um. Makiko. right?
Call me Maki.


You've been here forever... Worried about your Dad?
Yeah. plus I got nothin' else to do.
Oh...
That box you held for me the other day...
Hm?
You know.. on the ferry
Oh yeah..
In it was this guy's birthday present...
Really...?
But he's too popular..
..


You should go get a tan.
You're so wimpy looking!

Do you have a girlfriend?
TWITCH
Shin, I'm up.
Good

Let's go
Huh?

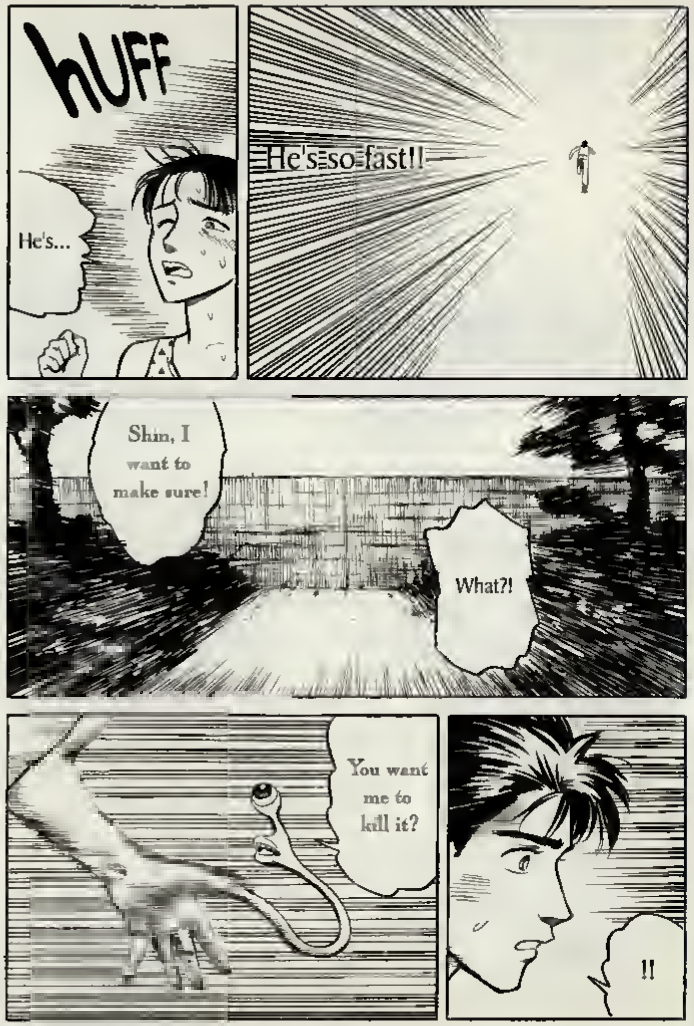
It's so hot here.

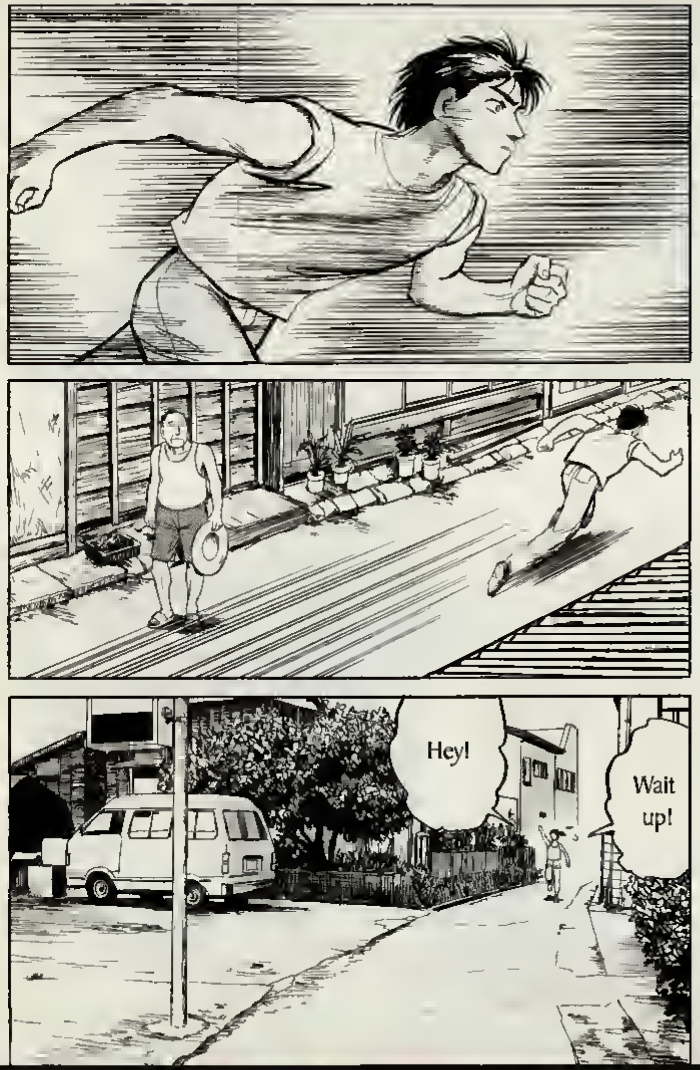
Hee

How about a swim then?
You did come all the way here!

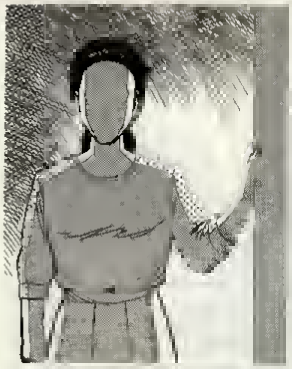
Which way to the beach?!
It's OK you don't have to go swimming
Are you mad at me?
It's down there...
DASH
Hey!
Wait!
No, this street is a dead end... turn at the next street!

SLAP
?!
Shin! Parasyte!
300 yards ahead... towards the ocean!
At Last!!
Maki!
!


huff
He's...
He's so fast!!
Shin, I want to make sure!
What?!
You want me to kill it?
!!

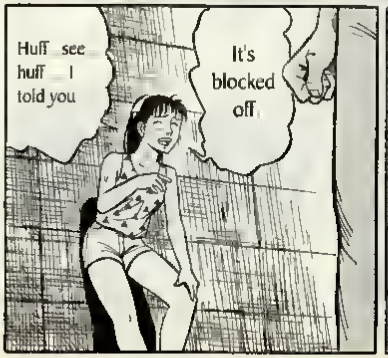

Hey!
Wait up!

STOMP



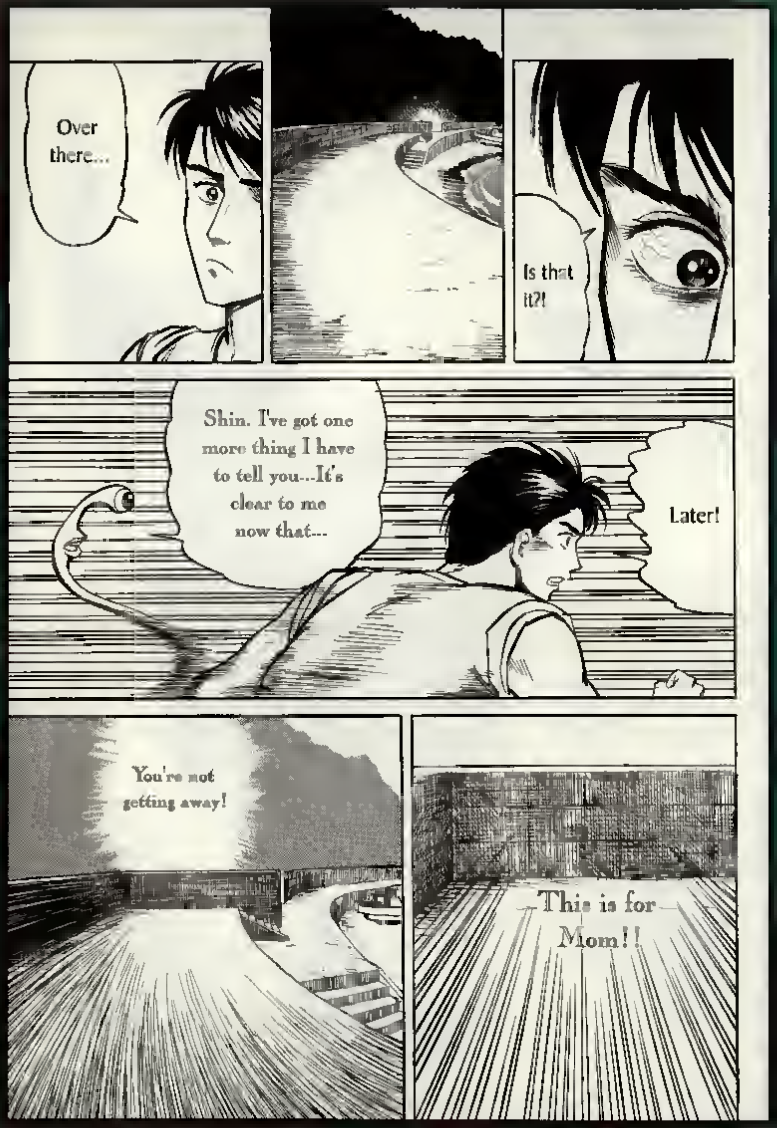
Yes!
I can't stand knowing that thing's still alive!!

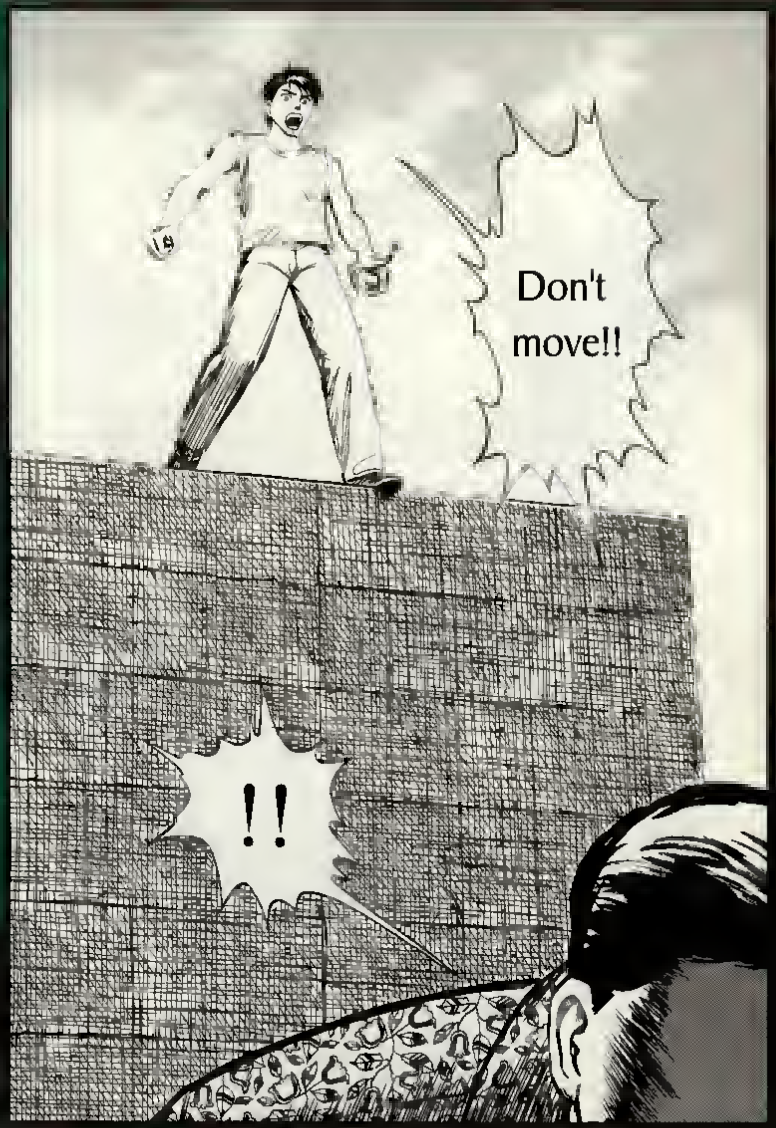
ha ha
TAT
TAT
TAT

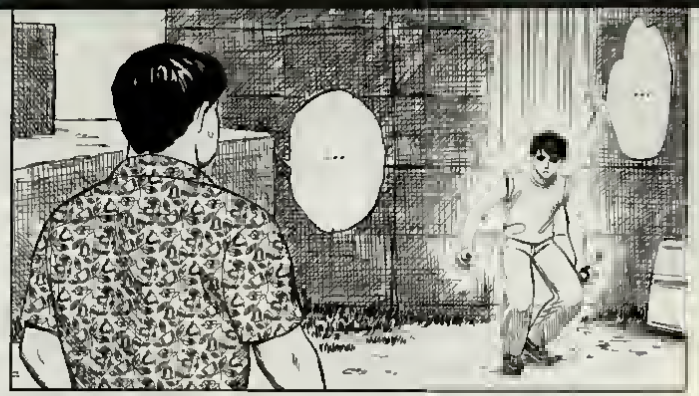

Huff see huff I told you
It's blocked off

You've got to go around

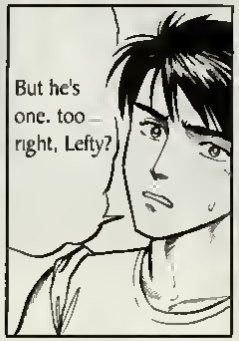
AAAA
No... way...!
GRAB

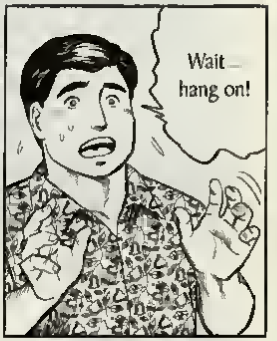

Over there...
Is that it?!
Shin. I've got one more thing I have to tell you--It's clear to me now that---
Later!
You're not getting away!
This is for Mom!!

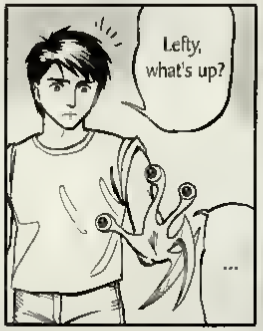

Don't move!!
!!

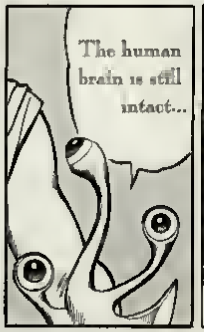

...
...

We're wrong..!


But he's one, too— right, Lefty?


Wait— hang on!


Lefty, what's up?
...


The human brain is still intact...

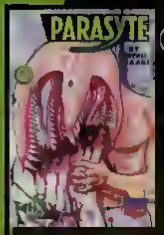
What...?!

Wh... What...?!

No... see. it's true
Really...
It's for real, man---
..
...
Shin, he's right. The bram's intact.
The Parasyte is just on the lower face and neck.
Yup.

ha... ha ha
Damn...aren't you a freaky one?! In the hand?!
What the ..?!
Look at his face! He's not human!

PARASYTE



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SEGA Fan Art Contest Winners

Way, way, WAY back in issue 2-5, when we were still called MixxZine, we offered a little contest where you, our faithful readers, were to create artwork based on Sega video-game characters. The booty (no, that means "prizes," you sick puppies) for the best two entries were ***Shen Mue*** **CD singles** from the highly-anticipated Sega Dreamcast game!

We got a lot of great entries, and trimming them down to only two wasn't easy. But, here they are. In no particular order, congratulations to **Cory Gustke of Cabot, AR**, and **Dawn Oshiro of Aiea, HI.**

Cory sent us three drawings based on various Sega Saturn games, including Fuu from *Magic Knight Rayearth*, Eiji Shinjo from *Toh Shin Den*, and the one pictured here, Chaz Ashley from *Phantasy Star IV.*

Dawn went the extra mile with a painted, Alex Ross-inspired (my interpretation) cast-of-characters portrait of Sega Satum's last great hurrah, *Shining Force III.* Dawn even added some great dialog, voicing many a Sega-Saturn owners' grief regarding the never-released second and third scenarios of *SF III.*

Nicely done, Cory and Dawn!

Enjoy the *Shen Mue* CD singles! While we've got your attention, **check out our Phan Art pages**, as well as our website **(www.toky-opop.com)**, for more entries. And to everyone who entered,

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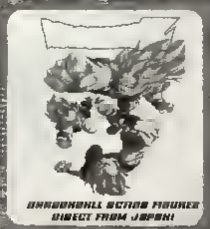

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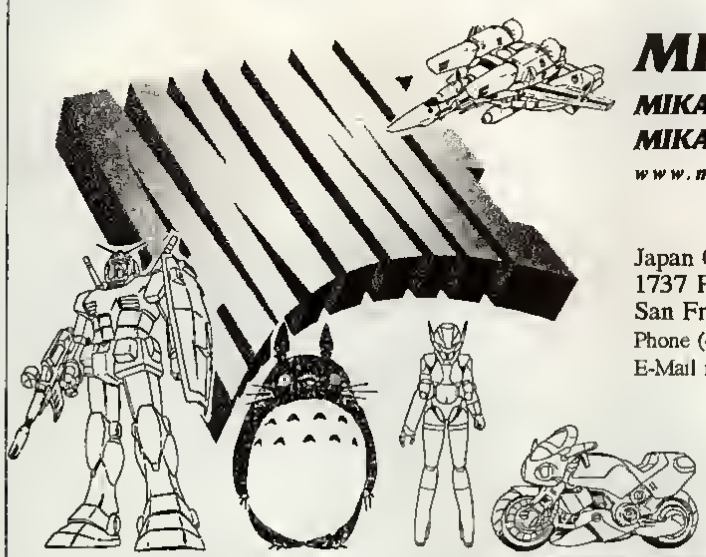

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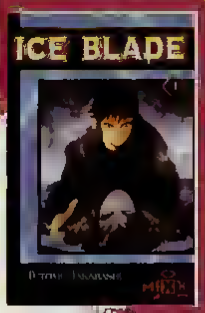

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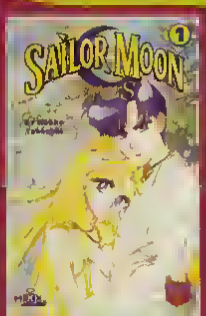

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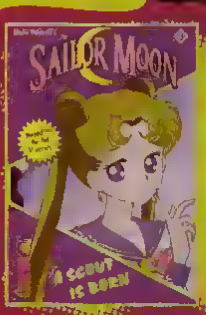

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